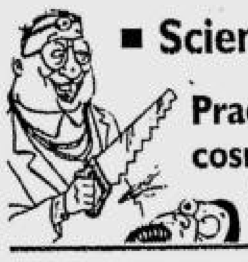


■ Science / B10

Practice of quack cosmetic doctors thriving

■ Across / A11

First aid reaches Samar frontier town

■ Saturday Special /

Lani Misalucha gives up career for quiet life in US

■ Sports / A23

Nets, Spurs a win away from sweep

■ Business / B1

Gov't disputes IMF growth projection

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Saturday, April 24, 2004 ★★ 66 pages / 9 sections / vol. 19 / no. 136 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Davide to investors: No need to fear high court

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHILE admitting that some recent controversial Supreme Court decisions may have shaken investor confidence, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday rejected criticisms that the high court was guilty of unwarranted intrusion into economic matters

DAVIDE/ A15

Mayoral bet campaign runs on camote, corn, etc.

By Grace C. Albasin
PDI Mindanao Bureau

KAMOTE LANG... AYOS NA!

VALENCIA CITY, Bukidnon—With only a budget of P30,000, Leandro Catarata, 41, is running for mayor in this city.

MAYORAL/ A16

GMA orders Pagcor to answer charges

No probe but execs to bare records in proper forum

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

REACTING to charges that government gaming funds and resources were being used in her election campaign, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday directed officials of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. to "deal with this issue with full transparency."

"Records must be made available for public scrutiny and officials must be ready to answer questions before the proper fora," Ms Macapagal said in a statement. She also said she welcomed the help of Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz "in any inquiry into these matters," as well as his "concern over the proper use of public funds."

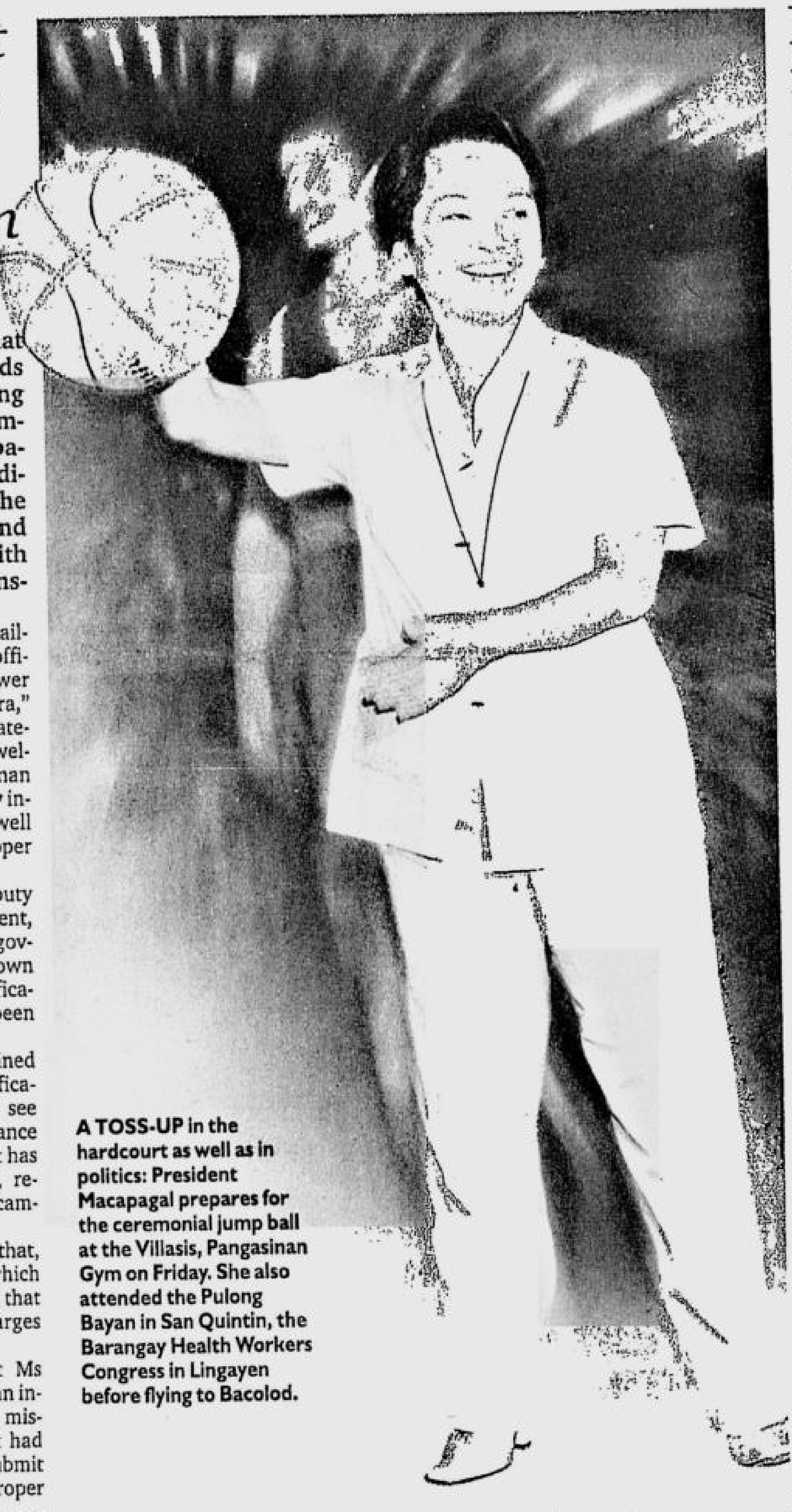
Ricardo Saludo, deputy spokesperson for the President, said that she was not using government resources for her own campaign, and that disqualification cases against her had been dismissed.

"We have always maintained that in all of those disqualification cases—and we do not see this recent case as any assistance to those cases—the President has never utilized public funds, resources or personnel for her campaign," Saludo said.

"We continue to maintain that, and we believe the fora in which these cases are filed will find that there is no basis for these charges against [her]," he added.

Saludo pointed out that Ms Macapagal had not ordered an investigation into the alleged misuse of Pagcor resources but had asked its officials to submit records and testify at the "proper

GMA ORDERS/ A7



A TOSS-UP in the hardcourt as well as in politics: President Macapagal prepares for the ceremonial jump ball at the Villasis, Pangasinan Gym on Friday. She also attended the Pulong Bayan in San Quintin, the Barangay Health Workers Congress in Lingayen before flying to Bacolod.

VAL HANDUMON

FAR FROM OVER

For 1st time, GMA clearly leads Poe

By Ruben Alabastro
Desk Editor

FOR THE first time, President Macapagal-Arroyo has taken a clear lead over Fernando Poe Jr. in the latest opinion survey of Social Weather Stations, SWS head Mahar Mangahas said yesterday.

Less than three weeks before the elections, the SWS published its April 10-17 survey showing Ms Macapagal holding a 35.3 percent to 30.8 percent edge over the movie actor in voter ratings.

But although she may have jumped ahead of her rivals, the fight for the presidency is far from over, analysts said.

Ultimately, the substantial chunk of undecided voters, nearly 11 percent, and the power of political clans may decide who will govern the deeply divided country for the next six years, they said.

"It's now a game for political operatives ... *Depende na yan sa gapangan*," analyst Antonio Gatmaitan, head of the think-tank Political Applied Economy Research (Pear) Foundation told the INQUIRER.

Gatmaitan was referring to the ability of entrenched

IT'S TOUCH/ A15

Roco bets say fund misuse can oust Gloria

LUCENA CITY—Candidates of Raul Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-Asa yesterday warned that the planned May 1 rally against President Macapagal-Arroyo's alleged misuse of public funds could lead to her ouster.

But they stressed that they were not inciting the people to do another Edsa.

Speaking at a press conference at a restaurant here, senatorial candidate Mel "Batas" Mauricio said: "It is the constitutional right of the people to rise up and change their leader, not by election, but through direct action, just like Edsa I and II."

"And this is our warning to the administration: Beware the Filipino people," the lawyer added.

Alyansa vice presidential candidate Herminio Aquino said Filipinos were "furious deep inside."

"If given an outlet, they could use the May 1 protest rally as a venue to release their pent-up anger," he said.

Senatorial candidate Edno Joson aired the same sentiment: "The people are now seething with anger. What is at stake here is the stability of the country. President Macapagal-Arroyo is doing everything to remain in power..."

Aquino said the planned mass action would be a good opportu-

ROCO/ A15

RP stocks soar to 3-yr closing high

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PHILIPPINE STOCKS hit a three-year high yesterday after President Macapagal-Arroyo for the first time grabbed a clear lead over actor Fernando Poe Jr in an opinion poll 18 days before elections.

Fund managers and other analysts attributed the rise not only to the survey results but to non-political factors, as well.

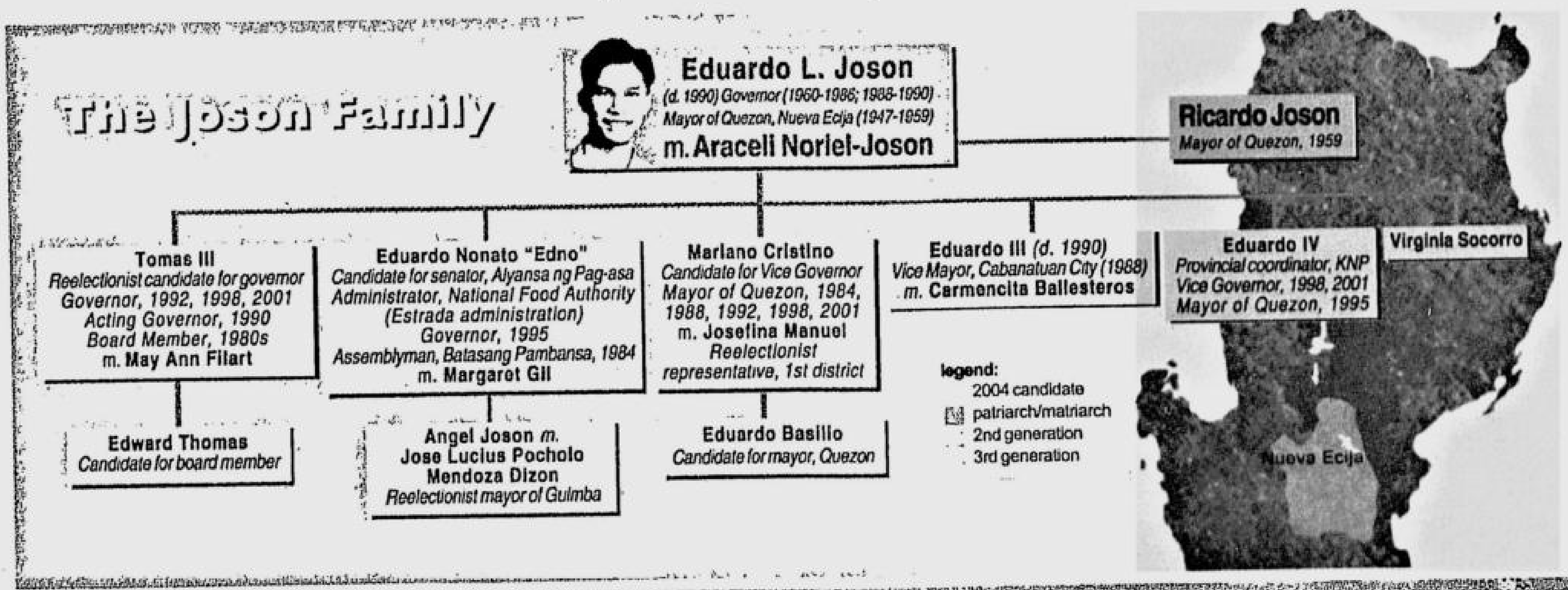
These included Wall Street's upturn overnight, expectations of buoyant first quarter corporate results, and market gains by

RP STOCKS/ A15

ENGAGED: One of the country's most sought-after bachelors, Rep. Miguel Zubiri is set to marry Audrey Tan, VJ of Studio 23, late this year or early next summer. Said to be the spiciest of the "Spice Boys," Zubiri popped the question at Amanpulo, a world-class resort in Palawan. *(Story in Super! Page 12)*

A NATION OF CLANS

Central Luzon: Aquino-Cojuangco most durable, unique



The Joson Family
Eduardo L. Joson
(d. 1990) Governor (1960-1986; 1988-1990)
Mayor of Quezon, Nueva Ecija (1947-1959)
m. Araceli Noriel-Joson
Ricardo Joson
Mayor of Quezon, 1959
Tomas III
Reelectionist candidate for governor
Governor, 1992, 1998, 2001
Acting Governor, 1990
Board Member, 1980s
m. May Ann Filart
Eduardo Nonato "Edno"
Candidate for senator, Alyansa ng Pag-asa
Administrator, National Food Authority
(Estrada administration)
Governor, 1995
Assemblyman, Batasang Pambansa, 1984
m. Margaret Gil
Mariano Cristino
Candidate for Vice Governor
Mayor of Quezon, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2001
m. Josefina Manuel
Reelectionist representative, 1st district
Eduardo III (d. 1990)
Vice Mayor, Cabanatuan City (1988)
m. Carmencita Ballesteros
Eduardo IV
Provincial coordinator, KNP
Vice Governor, 1998, 2001
Mayor of Quezon, 1995
Virginia Socorro
Edward Thomas
Candidate for board member
Angel Joson m.
Jose Lucius Pocholo Mendoza Dizon
Reelectionist mayor of Guimba
Eduardo Basilio
Candidate for mayor, Quezon
legend:
2004 candidate
patriarch/matriarch
2nd generation
3rd generation
Nueva Ecija

By PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
Project Editor: Leah P. Makabenta

(Second of seven parts)

ELEKSYON 2004 SPECIAL REPORT

DYNASTY-BUILDING is particularly active in Pampanga, the home province of President Macapagal-Arroyo, herself the daughter of a former President, Diosdado Macapagal. The most recent emerging dynasty is Gov. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, the popular movie actor who is making a bid for national office but is ensuring that his local political base goes to his next of kin.

Most of the active political families in Pampanga are second-

CENTRAL/ A16

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Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/24/04

FPJ 'dummy of plunderers'–Joma

Delfin T. Mallari Jr.,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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According to Jose Maria Sison, chief political consultant for the National Democratic Front, the masses are not lacking in discernment in political matters, and in fact, have realized that popular movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. and now presidential candidate, is "inferior" compared to his principal rival, President Macapagal-Arroyo and even his close friend, deposed President Estrada, in terms of preparation and experience.

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Malacañang, for once, agreed with Sison. "For the first time since 1986, Jose Ma. Sison has his political analysis right," said Presidential chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao said. "He is basing his analysis on concrete conditions," he added.

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Sison explained: "Those who underestimate the intelligence of the masses often forget that in the Philippine political landscape there are patriotic and progressive forces, including revolutionary ones, that assist the toiling masses of workers and masses understand the Philippine situation and issues regarding the economy, politics, culture and so on." Sadly, Poe had not even approached these forces for support, he said.

In sharp contrast to Estrada, who had been mayor, senator, and vice president before he was elected President, FPJ had never been elected to any public office and has not successfully projected himself as a champion of the poor beyond the screen. "He is aloof, arrogant and short-tempered," Sison said.

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Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino lawyer Sixto Brillantes had said the Comelec list could actually contain multiple entries for a single individual.

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APRIL 21 - 25, 2004
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SM MEGAMALL, ORTIGAS CENTER

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

1. Trans Sport Show Cup Open Class Car Competition
2. Search for the 2004 Miss Trans Sport Show
3. "Itallan Marques" Special Display by the Manila Sports Car Club
4. C!Top Driver Challenge "Search for the Next Racing Superstar" (Gran Turismo Video Game Challenge)
5 Trade and Retail Booths of automotive accessories
6. Daily Raffle and Automotive Video Show
7. Free Car Show Stickers, Coffee by Cafe Puro, Drinking Water by Taytan International Corp. (until supply lasts!)

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Political Ad paid by Advocates of Alvarez Independent Senatorial Campaign

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Second FRONT PAGE

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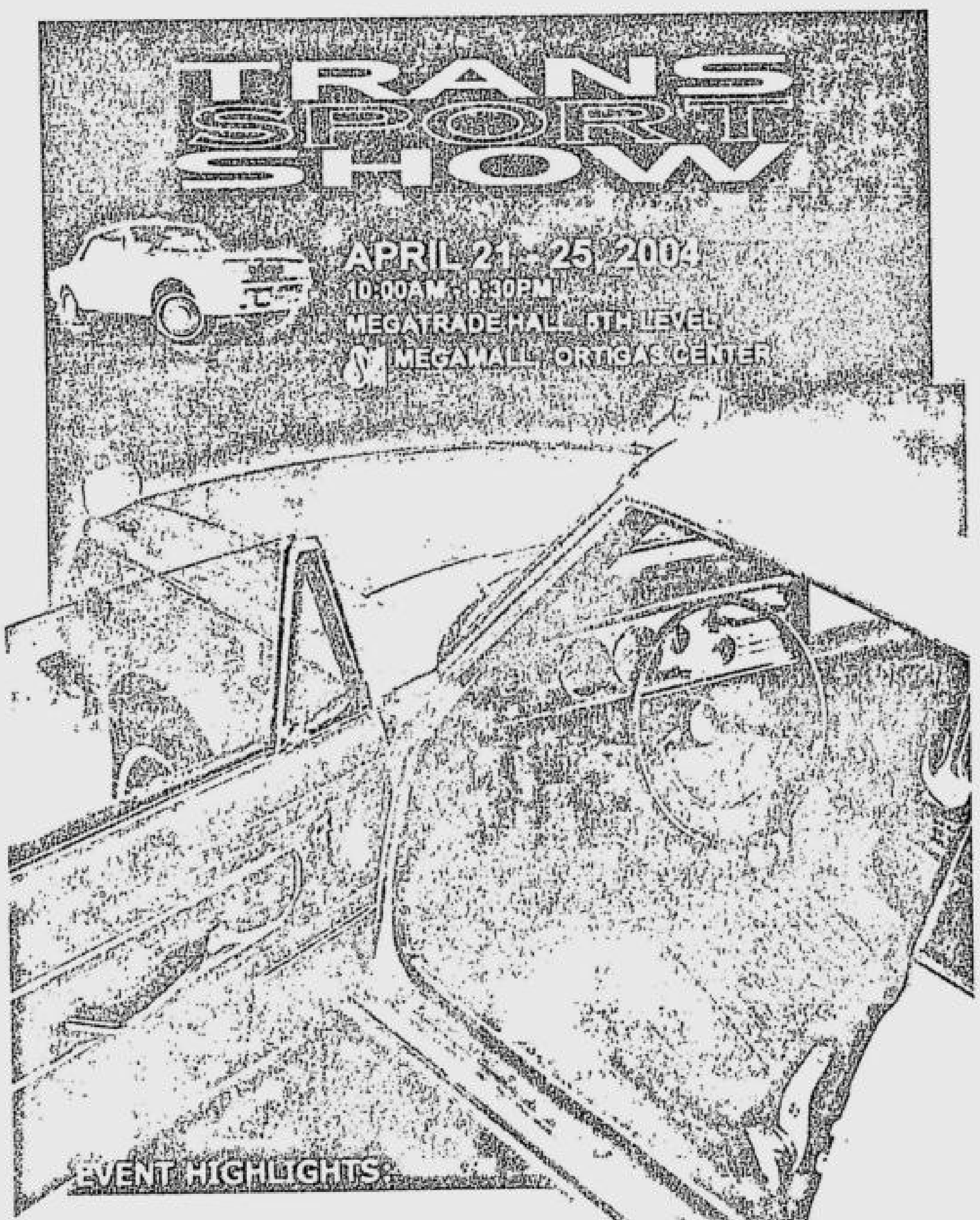

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Mel Chavez a nuisance bet, says Comelec

THE SUPREME Court has upheld the earlier decision of the Commission on Elections to disqualify Melchor Chavez from the senatorial race for being a nuisance candidate.

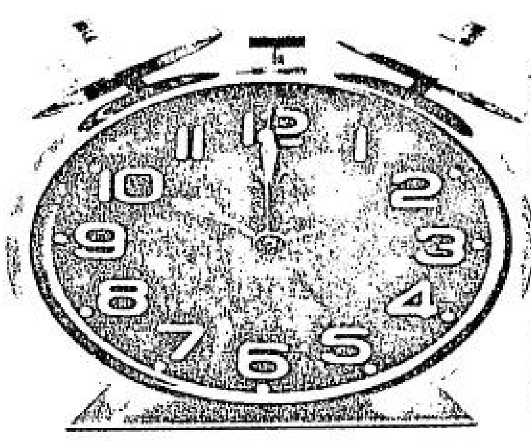
Melchor's disqualification was sought by former solicitor-general and Alyansa ng Pag-asa senatorial candidate Francisco Chavez who said that Melchor ran for the Senate to sow confusion among voters and destroy his campaign.

In a nine-page resolution, the SC upheld the Comelec's decision declaring Melchor a nuisance candidate and dismissed Melchor's appeal before the tribunal for lack of merit.

The high tribunal said the Comelec ruling disqualifying Melchor was "based on facts which lead to no other conclusion but that (Melchor) is indeed a nuisance candidate."

The SC noted that Melchor had also been disqualified in the 1992 and 1998 national elections. In 2001, Melchor ran again but obtained only two percent of the vote, the court added. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Our population clock is ticking...



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A joint OFW reintegration program of DOLE and OWWA

OFW Groceria Project

OFW at Kapamilya: Kabalikat Kayo sa Kaunlaran

Alinsunod sa layunin ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo na pag-ibayuhin ang mga programa at serbisyo para sa kapakanan ng mga overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), at bilang pagkilala sa kanilang ambag sa ating ekonomiya at sa napakahalagang papel na kanilang ginagampanan sa ating pambansang kaunlaran, ang OFW Reintegration Program ay inilunsad ng Office of the Undersecretary for Workers Protection, Returning Migrant Workers, and the Informal Sector ng Department of Labor and Employment sa pakikipagtulungan ng Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

Upang maisakatuparan ang nasabing programa, itinatag ang "OFW Groceria Project" sa layuning iangat ang antas ng pamumuhay ng mga OFWs at kanilang pamilya sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng pagkakataon na magkaroon sila ng sariling negosyo o pagkakakitaan. Ang proyekto ay malawakang inilunsad sa buong bansa at tinatayang maitatayo ang humigit kumulang na 1,000 OFW groceria bago matapos ang buwan ng Mayo 2004.

Ang OFW Groceria Project ay ipinatutupad at pinamamahalaan ng tanggapan ng DOLE Undersecretary for Workers Protection and Welfare, Returning Migrant Workers, and the Informal Sector. Ito ay nagbibigay ng pautang na walang interes at ipamamahagi sa mga kuwalipikadong Overseas Filipino Workers-Family Circles (OFCs) sa pamamagitan ng mga paninda na nagkakahalaga ng hindi hihigit sa P50,000.

Bukod sa pautang, magbibigay rin ang DOLE-OWWA ng mga kaukulang pagsasanay upang maturuan at pag-ibayuhin ang kaalaman ng mga benepisyaryo ukol sa tamang pagpapatakbo at pamamahala ng kanilang mga groceria.

MGA BENEPISYARYO

1. Mga OFW Family Circles na kinabibilangan ng mga pamilya ng OFWs na binuo o itinatag ng OWWA, mga NGOs, mga simbahan, mga kasapi ng Philippine Comprehensive OFW Reintegration (PhilCORE), mga nagsibalik na OFWs, at mga OFWs na retirado o wala nang hanapbuhay sa kasalukuyan; at
2. Mga pederasyon, samahan, organisasyon at kooperatiba ng OFWs.

PANUNTUNAN SA PAUTANG

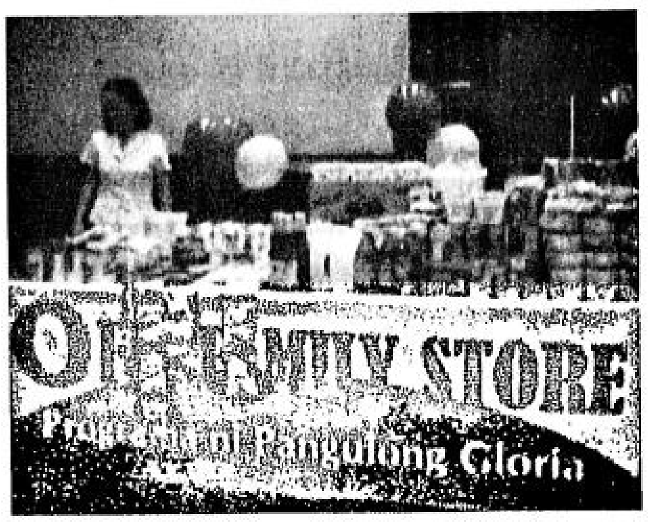
Para sa lugar na pagtatayuan ng groceria

1. Dapat ay maraming OFWs sa komunidad o barangay na pagtatayuan ng groceria; at
2. Dapat ay malakas ang naturang OFW Family Circle sa komunidad.

Para sa mga OFCs

1. Dapat ay may legal na personalidad (nakarehistro sa SEC, DTI, CDA o DOLE);
2. Dapat ay may 15 o higit pa na miyembro;
3. Dapat ang mga miyembro ay permanenteng residente ng naturang barangay/komunidad;
4. Dapat ay may magandang reputasyon at relasyon sa barangay/komunidad; at
5. Dapat ay handang lumahok sa mga pagsasanay ukol sa pamamahala at pagpapalago ng negosyo.

Malugod na pinasinayaan ni DOLE Sec. Patricia A. Sto. Tomas ang paggawad ng sertipiko sa mga benepisyaryo ng OFW Groceria.



Ang mga panindang gaya nito ang siyang panimulang ilalaman ng mga OFW Groceria sa bansa.

OFW GROCERIA PROJECT
Programang Handog ni Pangulong GLORIA
"OFW at Kapamilya: Kabalikat Kayo sa Kaunlaran"
Ilan lamang sa mga mapalad na benepisyaryo ng OFW Groceria nang ito ay ilunsad sa National Capital Region kamakailan.

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OFW FAMILY STORE
Programa ni Pangulong Gloria
Tulad ng mga benepisyaryo sa Cordillera Administrative Region, nakatakda ring bigyan ng orientation sa proyektong groserya ang iba pang OFW-Family Circles sa iba't ibang rehiyon.

DETALYE NG PAUTANG

Halaga ng Pautang	Mga paninda para sa grocerlana nagkakahalaga ng hindi hihigit sa P50,000.00 sa bawat kwalipikadong Overseas Filipino Workers Family Circle (OFC)
Katapat na Puhunan	Lugar o espasyo para sa tindahan at mga gastusin ng *OFC* tulad ng registration fees, business permit, etc.
Paggamit ng Pautang	Mga paninda na ipagbibili ng tingi o pakyawan sa kanilang komunidad
Interes	Walang patubo (0%)
Termino ng Pagbabayad	Dalawang taon na may palugit na dalawang buwan
Pamamaraan ng Pagbabayad	Buwanang patas na hulog sa loob ng 2 taon

MGA KAILANGANG DOKUMENTO

1. Plano sa pagnenegosyo;
2. Application form;
3. Katibayan ng kontribusyon ng OFW sa OWWA o katibayan ng pagiging kamag-anak ng isang OFW;
4. Rehistro ng asosasyon sa SEC, DTI, CDA o DOLE;
5. Dokumento ng asosasyon tulad ng:
    - Article of Incorporation at By-Laws kung korporasyon
    - Article of Cooperation at By-Laws kung kooperatiba
    - Constitution at By-Laws kung organisasyon/asosasyon
6. Sertipikasyon mula sa mga miyembro na pinahihintulutan o inaatasan ang mga opisyales na irepresenta ang asosasyon sa paglahok sa proyekto; at
7. Kasunduan sa pag-utang.

Ang kauna-unahang OFW Groceria sa Pilipinas

Malaking ginhawa para sa tulad ni Gng. Juanich at kanyang grupo ang pagkakaroon ng disenteng kabuhayang hatid ng OFW Groceria.

RainForest
OFW FAMILY STORE
Simbolo ng bagong pag-asa ang kauna-unahang OFW Groceria na ito na itinayo sa Payatas, Quezon City.

"Isang malaking tulong ang OFW Groceria Project sa 30 pamilya ng mga OFW sa Payatas," ani Gng. Rosario Tan Juanich, pangulo ng Payatas Council of Women, Inc. – Samahan ng mga OFWs at mga Pamilya (PCWI-SOP). Ipinagbunyi kamakailan ang naturang grupo bilang kauna-unahang OFW Family Circle na pinagkalooban ng OFW Groceria sa bansa.

Inilunsad noong Marso 4 ni Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto.Tomas ang naturang proyekto sa pamamagitan ng pagkakaloob ng OFW Groceria certificates of eligibility sa PCWI-SOP at 35 pang ibang OFW Family Circles sa lunsod ng Maynila, Quezon, at Kalookan. Ang sertipiko ay nagkakaloob ng P50,000 halaga ng mga sari-saring paninda para sa mga OFW Family Circles o samahan ng mga OFW at kanilang pamilya.

Itinayo ng PCWI-SOP ang kanilang OFW Groceria sa isang lote na pahiram ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System sa kanto ng Gravel Pit Road at Molave Street, katapat ang Payatas High School at ang MWSS Watershed, sa Bgy. Payatas.

Ani Gng. Juanich, natulungan ang mga kasapi ng PCWI-SOP na may tindahan. Pinagkalooban sila ng groserya na nagkakahalaga ng P2,000 hanggang P5,000.

Pursigido si Gng Juanich na matulungan ang mga OFW at kanilang pamilya sa Payatas. Sa mga nagdaang taon, naisulong na rin niya na magkaroon ng isang mataas na paaralan ang Payatas.

"Umaasa po kaming makapagtatatag din ng OFW Center na tutulong hindi lamang sa mga pamilyang OFW sa Payatas kundi sa iba pang pamilyang OFW sa mga karatig barangay sa District 2 ng Quezon City kasama na ang Bagong Silangan, Commonwealth, Batasan Hills, at Holy Spirit. Ang Payatas noon ay isang kinakatakutang pook, subalit sa pagtutulungan ng mga mamamayan dito, isa na itong barangay na payapa at may pag-asa."

"Ang tindahang OFW ay pang pamilya na, pang komunidad pa!"

> *"Ang Philippine Reintegration Program ay inilunsad bilang pagpupugay at pagdakila sa mga kababayan nating nagtatrabaho sa ibang bansa."*
>
> **- Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo**

Makipag-alam sa Amin!

Ang mga nagnanais na makilahok sa OFW Groceria Project ay maaaring magsadya sa pinakamalapit na DOLE Regional Office o OWWA Regional Unit. Maaari ring magsadya sa OFW Groceria Project Management Team, 7th Floor, DOLE Bldg., General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila

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RP lawmen to verify new terror threat

By Alcuin Papa and Christian V. Esguerra

INTELLIGENCE agents of the military and police have been mobilized to verify the reported threat by an obscure foreign terrorist organization to launch attacks against the Philippines and seven other countries supporting the US-led war on terror.

"We have instructed our intelligence units to monitor, to validate the veracity and authenticity of the report," military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told reporters yesterday.

Lucero said the military was taking the threat seriously but they have yet to receive any information on the terrorist threat by the group called the Yellow-Red Overseas Organization which warned that it will launch the terror attacks before the end of the month.

The group said it would target diplomatic compounds, airlines and public transportation systems in Australia, Japan, Kuwait, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand from April 20 to 30.

"We haven't received any official report yet, even the defense department; but we will not be setting that aside. We will be taking that report seriously," he said.

Police intelligence operatives have also been mobilized to find everything about the obscure group which describes itself as "anti-American."

"We're taking the threat seriously," police spokesman Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao told reporters yesterday.

"We want to know about things like its organization, membership and strategy."

Goltiao admitted that the Philippines is a likely target of terrorists because of its ties with the US which is leading the international effort against Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network and its affiliates.

But the official said there was no cause for alarm. "We're always ready against terrorism," Goltiao said.

Malacañang also said the Philippines is prepared for any new terrorist threats and would maintain its forces in Iraq despite the threat.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said in a statement that "effective security measures are in place and we assure the public that we are ready to face and thwart terrorist attacks in the country."

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita confirmed the new threats were discussed at an intelligence meeting on Thursday but said they had not picked up any new signs of impending terror attacks.

Ermita also said they were ready for the reported threat of the group which warned of the attacks in a letter sent to the South Korean Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand war.

With practically no knowledge about Yellow-Red, the PNP is relying on its three-tiered defense system, the same strategy it has been implementing against other forms of criminality.

The PNP measures are largely dependent on "intelligence build-up" and "target-hardening" to make it difficult for terrorists to carry out attacks, he said.

Earlier this month, the police foiled a series of large terrorist attacks in Manila following the arrest of six suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim insurgent group accused of links to the Al-Qaida network. *With AFP report*

7th Fleet flagship in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—More than 450 American sailors arrived here yesterday morning aboard the USS Coronado, the temporary flagship of the United States Seventh Fleet, for a visit to renew ties with the Philippines.

The USS Coronado, an amphibious command and control ship based in Yokosuka, Japan, is described by its commander, Capt. Christopher Noble, as the most advanced command vessel in the world.

"The port visit will give us a chance to experience the unique culture of the Philippines and participate in community service projects," Noble told reporters.

He said the visit was initiated by the Philippine government and would be "regularly scheduled" to renew "friendship and acquaintances" between the two countries.

He said members of the US Navy will start their humanitarian mission today, including the repair of the New Cabalan Elementary School in Olongapo City and a visit to an orphanage in the city. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Be careful, Britons in RP told

BRITAIN has warned businesses and workers in the Philippines to tighten their security after an attack on the local unit of Royal Dutch Shell, a travel advisory said Thursday.

"British institutions and businesses and representatives of all non-governmental organizations should constantly review their security, taking local advice when appropriate," the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office said in its latest advisory.

It cited the incident on April 18 when the Manila office of the partly-British-owned Shell was hit by gunfire and a grenade, causing damage but no casualties. *AFP*

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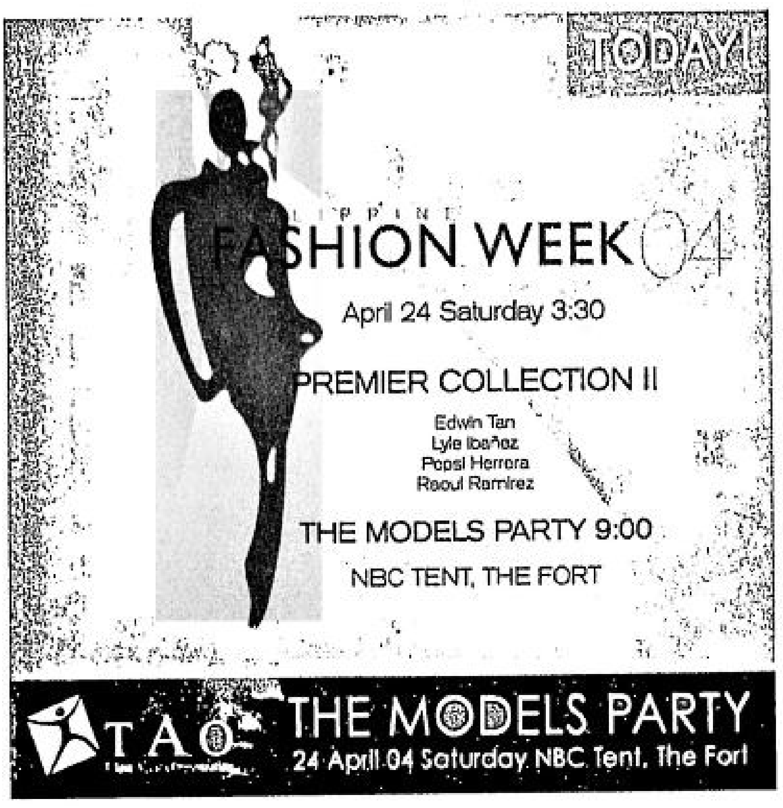

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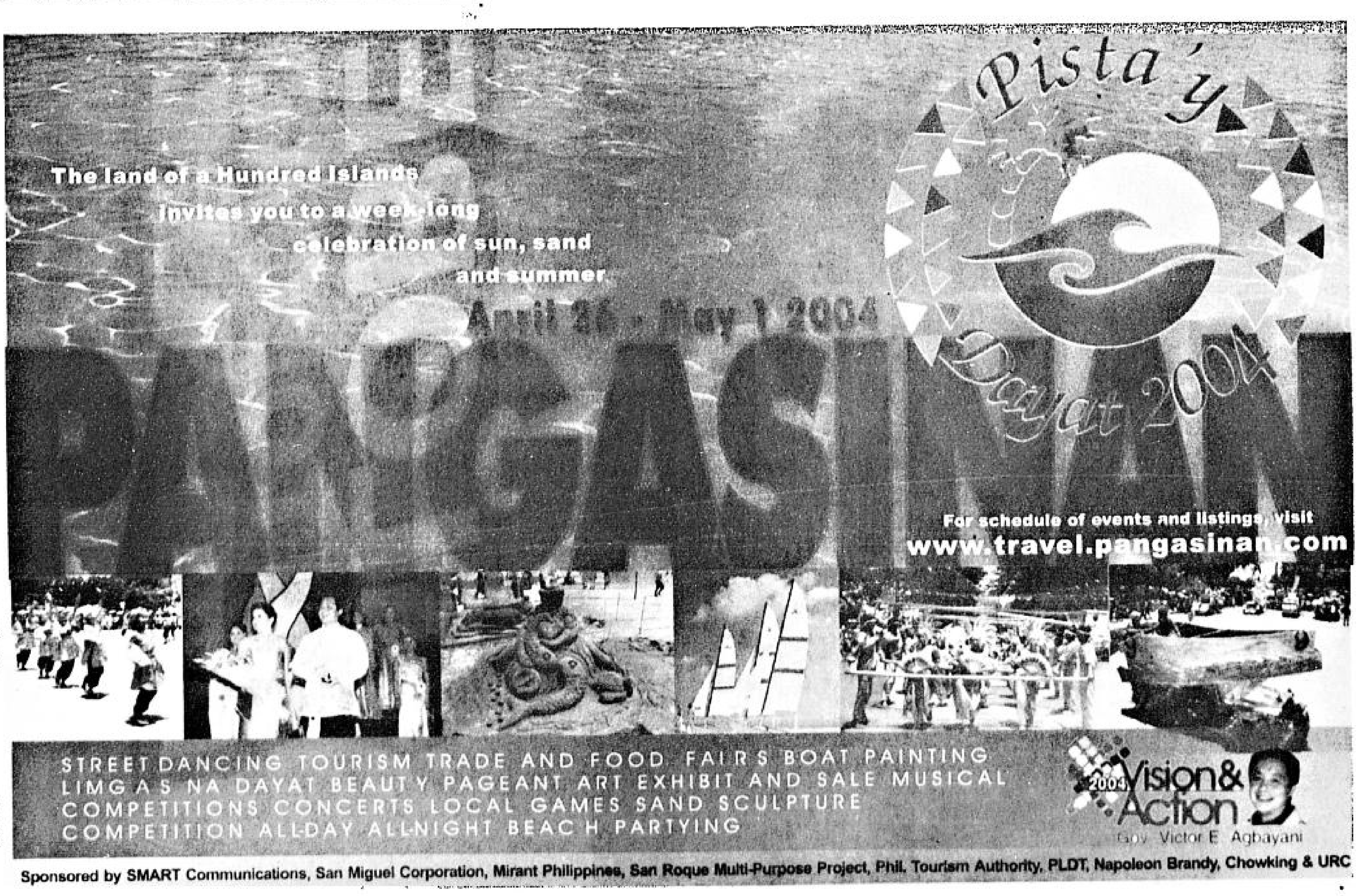

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Pagcor franchise extended 25 years

By Blanche S. Rivera

HO

FIVE years before its franchise was to expire, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. had effectively worked its way through the House of Representatives to secure a 25-year extension of its mandate, allegedly in exchange for funding of congressmen's projects.

Rep. Joel Villanueva of the party-list group Citizens Battle Against Corruption (Cibac) yesterday said Pagcor had even "indirectly bribed" him with P5 million worth of projects to stop his opposition to the proposed extension.

Pagcor's charter will expire in 2008. Villanueva said the government corporation had wanted an extension of 50 years, but the House approved only 25 years.

"It was natural for congressmen to receive funding from Pagcor for their projects, but it was much easier that time. Money was really pouring out," Villanueva said in a phone interview.

He said a Pagcor employee who accompanied the agency's officials led by chair Efraim Genuino to the committee hearings early last year approached him just after the deliberations and offered to fund his projects of up to P5 million.

The congressman said he declined and returned the emissary's business card.

But Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles, author of the bill deliberated on by the House committee on franchises, dismissed the allegation of impropriety.

"We strongly deny that the bill to extend the franchise of Pagcor was railroaded by the House of Representatives," he said. "How can they say this when the measure was also deliberated upon by the entire House and passed only on third reading?"

According to Nograles, the measure is still subject to the approval of the Senate and will still undergo changes and deliberations in the bicameral conference committee.

"It is malicious to claim that there was any impropriety in the passage of the measure, which we feel is to the best interest of the people," he said.

Like a blank check

Pagcor justified the need for a longer mandate by citing the interests of investors, Muntinlupa Rep. Rufino Biazon said.

He said Pagcor officials told the members of the House committee on franchises that the agency had to draw more investors for the Pagcor City, a planned entertainment center to be put up at the reclaimed area on Roxas Boulevard.

But the Pagcor officials refused to name the investors, Biazon said, adding that he and other congressmen opposed the measure because "it would be like issuing a blank check."

Villanueva said the only investor Pagcor was protecting was gambling mogul Stanley Ho, who visited the country last month to receive an honorary doctorate from the Angeles University Foundation in Pampanga.

"They would like to assure Stanley Ho that Pagcor is here to stay," Villanueva said.

Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, who disclosed on Thursday the alleged use of Pagcor funds for President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign, had also linked Ho to the agency's joint-venture partners for the establishment of more casinos and slot machines nationwide.

Cruz had said that at least three of Pagcor's partners were from Hong Kong, where Ho is based, or run by Chinese businessmen here.

Marina

Documents provided by Pagcor employees show that the agency signed an agreement for lease with the Marina Square Properties Inc. (or Marina) on March. 13, 2003.

Marina is a subsidiary of the Chow Tai Fook Group of Companies, which is owned by Ho's business partner Cheng Yu-Tung.

The agreement states that Marina will provide Pagcor a casino complete with furniture, fixtures and equipment in exchange for 38 percent of the total casino revenues as "rental" for the property, now dubbed Marina Square.

Pagcor documents show that the contract with Marina was awarded without bidding, and that Marina is enjoying exemption from taxes, custom duties and other related charges by making it appear that the transactions are Pagcor's.

Cruz had also aired the suspicion that the soon-to-open casinos at the Manila Jockey Club in Cavite, and the Premier Hotel, Hyatt Marina Arcade and Hyatt Marina Casino in Manila were all in partnership with Ho's company or affiliates.

The contract with Marina was signed two months before the House approved the bill amending the Pagcor charter to extend its franchise.

Benefits

According to a source who asked not to be named, Nograles has "benefited greatly" from his alliance with Pagcor.

Other supporters of the bill have also easily secured funding from Pagcor for their projects, the source said.

Biazon said the measure extending Pagcor's franchise was in effect a "midnight arrangement."

Taguig-Pateros Rep. Allan Peter Cayetano said the bill was passed in the plenary when those opposing it were not in the session hall.

Villanueva, Cayetano and Biazon told the committee that the bill did not have to be discussed by the present Congress because the Pagcor charter was still five years away from expiry at that time.

"It was not yet expired, so why did we have to take it up? We should study first the effects of this reliance on revenues from gambling to sustain our economy," Cayetano said in a phone interview.

Cayetano filed a bill for the abolition of Pagcor during his first term as congressman, but it did not take off.

Pagcor officials appointed by Ms Macapagal have been accused of milking the agency for their personal gains.

But in a statement issued yesterday, the agency's press relations officer Edward King said: "Pagcor is willing to face its accusers in the proper forum to disprove allegations that it is engaged in irregularities of any kind." *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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GMA orders Pagcor to answer charges

From page A1

forum."

"There are entities that are empowered to look into violations of election laws and the use of public funds. At these fora when proper charges are filed or brought, Pagcor is directed to provide records to show exactly what went on," he said.

Pagcor, the government's third largest revenue earner, is under the Office of the President. Its chair, Efraim Genuino, is a close friend of Ms Macapagal's husband Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

In a press conference on Thursday, Cruz disclosed the alleged use of at least P68 million of Pagcor funds for Ms Macapagal's campaign.

CRUZ

Citing documents provided by Pagcor employees, he said the agency bought 180 motorcycles, 35 multicabs and 50 Ford Ranger pickups prominently bearing the President's name and used in highly visible community projects.

Cruz said he had earlier informed the President, through one of her close friends, about the "gross mismanagement" at Pagcor, but that nothing came out of it. He also said he sent the documents to the Office of the President on March 3.

Not proper forum

Cruz has turned over the documents provided by Pagcor employees to PlunderWatch, a group composed of civil society leaders who participated in the people-power uprising that drove then President Joseph Estrada from Malacañang.

PlunderWatch's Carol Araullo said Thursday the group would investigate whether "other people in higher authority know and profit from" the alleged misuse of Pagcor funds.

Contacted by phone yesterday, Araullo said an initial review of the documents showed that there could be a "basis" to file plunder charges against Pagcor officials.

But she added that the group would meet this weekend for a throrough review of the papers.

Saludo, however, said PlunderWatch was not the proper forum to discuss the matter.

"PlunderWatch may wish to bring it to the attention of the Ombudsman, the Sandiganbayan, or even the [Commission on Elections]," he said.

He also said they had to first verify whether the documents Cruz said he had forwarded to Malacañang had been "properly received."

"There is action already on the part of the President calling on Pagcor to provide records and to deal with the issue with full transparency," he said.

Asked if Ms Macapagal would order a stop to the alleged use of Pagcor vehicles and resources for her campaign, Saludo said: "Again, I think the issue here is whether, as alleged, Pagcor has broken the law or utilized resources for electioneering purposes. And the President has directed them to come forward with a proper explanation as well as the records to show whether or not such a misuse or alleged use of public funds has happened."

Saludo also said Malacañang was not considering Cruz's exposé part of the opposition black propaganda against the President.

Bigkis Pinoy

Pagcor funds are also being used for the campaign of Bigkis Pinoy, a party-list group believed to be a front of Mike Arroyo and his friends, according to Citizens' Battle Against Corruption (Cibac) Rep. Kim Bernardo-Lokin.

Lokin said that Bigkis Pinoy also ran and lost in the 2001 elections, and that its nominees included Pagcor media officer Edward King, a friend of Arroyo's.

Comelec records show that the Bigkis Pinoy Foundation indeed participated in the 2001 elections, and its nominees were King, Mario Cornista, Ramuel Agoncillo, James Ben L. Jerusalem and Rudy Guillen.

Eleuterio D. Coronel was listed as its president, the same name listed for the same position in the documents of the group now known as Bigkis Pilipino, a "political party."

For the May 10 elections, the group's nominees are listed as Cornista, a small and medium enterprise consultant; Ismael B. Tabo, a lawyer; Johnny G. Tan, a tricycle operator; Miraflor O. Tado, an employee; and Amando D. Ocampo Jr., Bigkis secretary general.

Reached by phone, Edward Martinez, who said he was a Bigkis staff member, said King resigned from the group two years ago.

King himself said neither the President nor her husband were ever part of the group.

Last March 30, the Comelec law department issued a certified list of political parties, sectoral organizations or coalitions participating in the party-list system for the May 10 elections. There were 61 groups listed.

Under the classification of "political party," Bigkis Pilipino was listed as the sixth of nine groups.

'Mind-boggling'

Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio yesterday expressed alarm over the alleged misuse of Pagcor funds.

"It is mind-boggling. It makes you feel angry at the way government funds are being scandalously squandered," Gervacio told the INQUIRER when asked to comment on Cruz's disclosure.

"Assuming that the revelations of Bishop Cruz are true," the Office of the Ombudsman should not wait for a complaint to be lodged concerning the matter, Gervacio said.

He said he would recommend to Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo that a probe be conducted immediately.

"The people expect the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct the necessary investigation ... and make an immediate judgment on the truth or falsity of the revelations," he said. "The shameless disposition of much-needed government funds should be stopped by all means, and the people responsible should not go unpunished."

According to Gervacio, the Constitution and the Office of the Ombudsman's own charter mandate it to "initiate, even without a complaint from another source, an investigation into anomalous disbursements of government resources that come to its attention."

"The people deserve to be informed of the action taken by this office and the outcome of such an investigation at the earliest time possible, if only to sustain their confidence in our government," he said.

Nothing concrete

But in Butuan City, presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson expressed doubt that Cruz's exposé would lead to anything concrete as far as legal action was concerned.

"The misuse of Pagcor funds has been going on for so long, not only for election purposes," Lacson said.

"Udong Mahusay, [a former employee of the First Couple] himself said P10-15 million was being delivered every two weeks to [the office of the President's husband] at the LTA building in Makati," he said.

Mahusay is Lacson's former star witness in his "Jose Pidal" exposé last year against Mike Arroyo.

Asked if he thought legal action would result from the exposé on Pagcor, Lacson said: "We're not optimistic anymore that something will come out of such exposés." *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Cynthia D. Balana, Martin P. Marfil and Norman Bordadora*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

3,000 feared dead in N. Korea train blast

SEOUL—Relief teams were headed to a remote corner of North Korea Friday where an explosion leveled high-rise buildings and hurled debris over 20 km, leaving up to 3,000 people dead or injured.

The South Korean government confirmed that two trains carrying fuel collided in the station of the city of Ryongchon on Thursday, triggering a massive blast and heavy casualties.

Witnesses said ash and debris were carried over the Chinese border 20 km to the north. They said the densely populated area around the station looked as if it had been bombed, and that high-rise buildings had been flattened.

"There was an explosion and there were many casualties," South Korean Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency said government officials had confirmed some 3,000 casualties without giving a breakdown of dead or injured.

North Korea declared a state of emergency following the blast that occurred just hours after leader Kim Jong-il passed through the railway station in his armored private train on his return from China, Yonhap said.

Jeong said it was too early to estimate the extent of the damage and the toll of dead and wounded.

"It is too premature to talk of the number of casualties," he said. "It will take a considerable time to estimate the extent of the damage."

Jeong said that two trains carrying flammable fuel collided in Ryongchon city igniting a huge explosion.

"We understand that a collision occurred when the trains carrying fuel oil were changing tracks at the Ryongchon station," he said.

The secretive Stalinist government in Pyongyang has yet to formally admit to the disaster and cut international phone lines after the incident. But after nearly 24 hours of silence the authorities asked a Red Cross team to visit the city to assess the scale of the carnage.

"They are going to look at the extent of the disaster and they will confirm what the needs are," Red Cross representative for East Asia John Sparrow said in Beijing.

China confirmed the blast had occurred and said two of its nationals were killed and 12 injured. *AFP*

A PICTURE taken on South Korean channel YTN shows flames and smoke near the Ryongchon train station April 22. AFP

Bush to ease Libya sanctions in reward for WMD move

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush has decided to allow US companies to resume most trade with Libya and to buy Libyan oil to reward Tripoli for giving up its weapons of mass destruction, US officials said on Thursday.

Bush is also poised to terminate the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act's provisions on Libya that allow him to punish non-US firms that invest more than $20 million a year in the North African nation's energy sector.

The moves reflect a desire to reward Tripoli for its landmark Dec. 19 announcement that it would give up the pursuit of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and what Washington has called its "excellent" work to eliminate them since then.

The US officials, who spoke on condition that they not be named, said some US sanctions will stay in place: Libyan government assets in the United States will remain frozen and air travel and aviation cooperation will still be restricted.

Libya will also remain on the US list of "state sponsors of terrorism," which bars it from receiving US arms exports, controls sales of "dual-use" items with military and civilian applications, limits US aid and requires Washington to vote against loans from international financial institutions.

The officials said Bush had made the decision to ease the other sanctions—which remove the main obstacles to US trade with Libya—but had not signed the papers, meaning an announcement could occur on Friday or possibly next week.

In one sign that an announcement is imminent, the administration briefed members of Congress on the decision.

Rep. Tom Lantos of California, the ranking Democrat on the House international affairs committee who visited Libya in January, praised the decision as measured and "fully merited."

Lantos said he was struck by "the impressive speed with which Libya has rid itself of its weapons of mass destruction and its destabilizing missile arsenal... The world is a much safer place as a result." *Reuters*

Iraqis blame British occupiers for bombings

BAGHDAD—US forces gave insurgents in besieged Fallujah only days to surrender their weapons, while protesters marched through Basra blaming British occupiers for suicide bombings that killed 68 people.

Three hostages, two Swiss and an Israeli Arab, were freed Thursday, a day after a Dane was confirmed as the second hostage murdered in the series of abductions to hit Iraq.

A South African security guard was shot dead in Baghdad, while tension remained high in both the Shiite south and Sunni Muslim strongholds where fallen Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein drew much of his support.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Iraq was going through a "difficult patch" but that the United States remained committed to a June 30 deadline for handing over power to Iraqis despite the violence.

"Changes always create uncertainty and we're just in that difficult period," Rumsfeld told a gathering of newspaper editors.

"The good Lord willing, we'll find a way through this difficult patch and end up with a government who will put the responsibility for the country back in the hands of the Iraqi people," he said. "It'll be an Iraqi solution."

As Basra residents mourned their dead, the US-led coalition blamed Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network for Wednesday's coordinated bombings, whose victims included 20 schoolchildren.

"It looks like al-Qaida," said a senior coalition official. "It's got all the hallmarks: it was suicidal, it was spectacular and it was symbolic."

But angry supporters of firebrand Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr, credited with fueling a deadly rebellion against the occupation this month, marched through Basra blaming the suicide attacks on the British troops who control southern Iraq.

A spokesperson for the cleric, wanted by the US forces for murder, said he had evidence British troops were involved in the bombings of police installations in and around Basra.

Capt. Hisham Hallawi, a spokesperson for the British forces, told CNN the accusation was "completely untrue."

US troops were also battling to ease tensions in Fallujah west of Baghdad, where fighting on Wednesday between US Marines and insurgents killed 36 Iraqis, according to US figures.

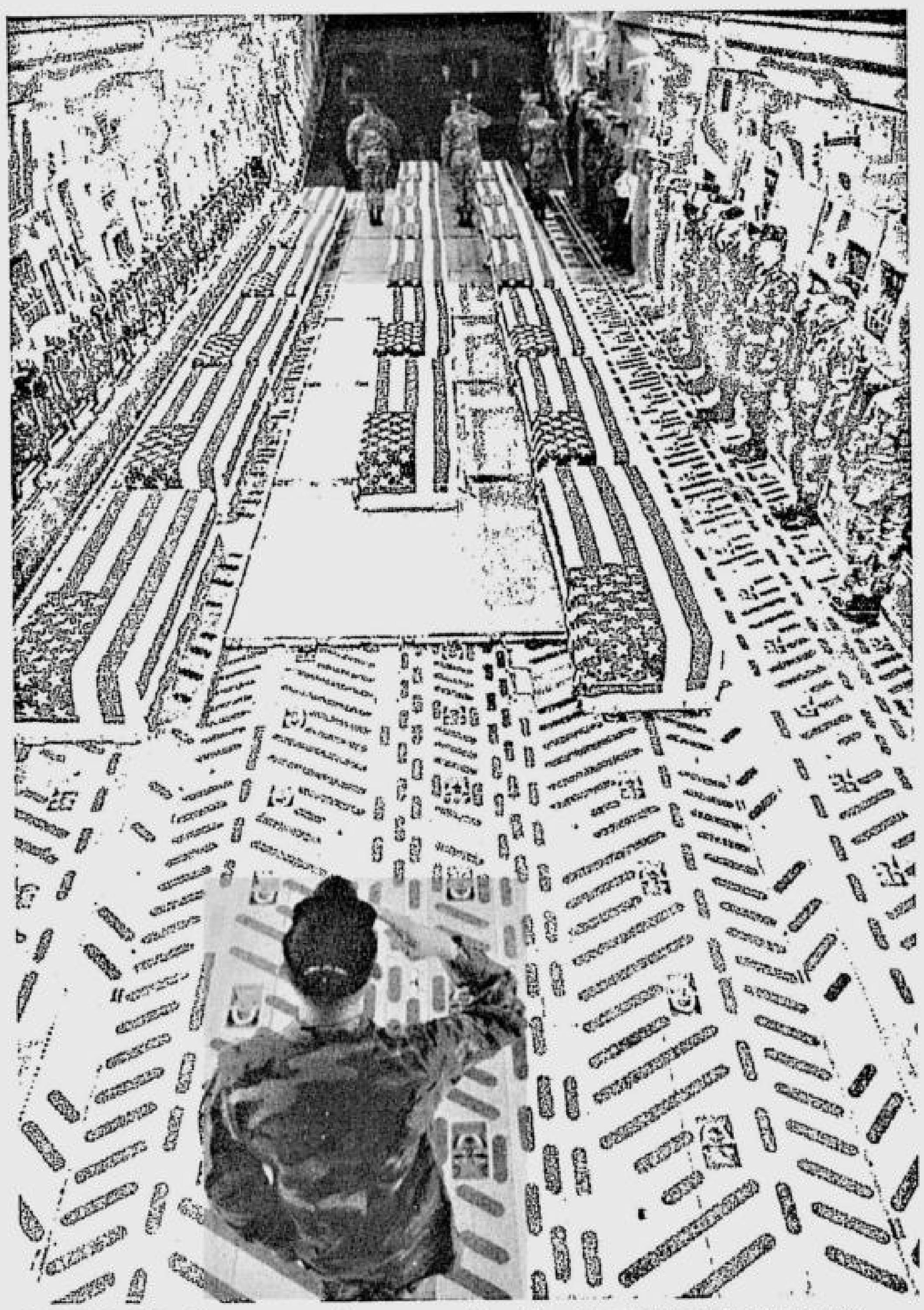
A US general warned the rebels they had "days not weeks" to turn in their weapons, dismissing arms already surrendered as a load of "junk."

Lt. Gen. James Conway said he believed around 200 hardcore foreign fighters remained in Fallujah and accused them of stoking tensions in the Sunni Muslim bastion.

Since the Americans laid siege to Fallujah three weeks ago, fighting has killed more than 600 Iraqis, according to hospital sources, along with scores of Marines.

Prime Minister Tony Blair said Britain had no plans to send more troops to Iraq to add to the 8,000 already serving alongside 135,000 US soldiers, as France and Poland called for a greater UN role in the war-torn country.

But the outgoing British special representative to Iraq, Jeremy Greenstock told the BBC that peace would have been easier to restore if more coalition troops had been sent to the country. *AFP*



COFFINS of US military personnel are prepared for off-loading at Dover Air Force Base in Dover, Delaware, in this undated photo. The US Air Force, in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, released to Web site http://www.thememoryhole.org on April 14 more than 300 photographs showing the remains of US service members returning home. REUTERS

US contractor fired after releasing photos of Iraq war coffins

WASHINGTON—A US contractor and her husband have been fired after her photograph of 20 flag-draped coffins of American troops going home from Iraq was published in violation of military rules.

"I lost my job and they let my husband go as well," Tami Silicio, who loaded US military cargo at Kuwait International Airport for a US company, said in an e-mail response to questions.

The Pentagon tightly restricts publication of photographs of coffins with the remains of US troops and has forbidden journalists from taking pictures at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, the first stop for the bodies of troops being sent home.

John Molino, a deputy undersecretary of defense who oversees the policy, told reporters the Pentagon was not involved in the decision to fire Silicio, but refused to say whether she should be rehired.

Molino said the policy, in effect since 1991, was crafted with input from families to protect the privacy and dignity of the deceased. Critics have said the rules were aimed at sanitizing the war for the public.

But the Air Force said that, in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, it released to a Web site (http://www.thememoryhole.org) on April 14 more than 300 photographs showing the remains of US service members returning home.

Lt. Col. Jennifer Cassidy, an Air Force spokesperson, said the request to make the photographs public initially was denied by Dover Air Force Base, then was granted by the Air Force Air Mobility Command. But Cassidy said the Pentagon had decided the release violated its own rules and had decided no further copies of the pictures will be made public.

The Seattle Times printed Silicio's photograph last weekend and again on Thursday. The picture shows soldiers tending to 20 coffins completely covered with American flags on April 7 inside a military cargo plane at the Kuwait airport. *Reuters*

Arnie proves to be an able administrator

By Adam Tanner

SAN FRANCISCO—In November a movie star without a single day's experience in political office became governor of California, the nation's most populous state mired in deadlocked politics and a swamp of economic woes.

Since then Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger has surprised critics by slashing car taxes, winning voter approval of a record bond to cover California's debts, and getting the Democratic-dominated legislature to reform America's most expensive workers' compensation system.

Supporters say the same qualities that made Schwarzenegger master of the bodybuilding universe and then a megastar in Hollywood have proved a magic potion in politics.

"It's not his movie star personality; there are plenty of movie stars that don't have the ability to do what he does," Jim Brulte, the California Senate Republican leader, said. "It's his desire to keep on driving toward the goal. It's his singular focus at solving the problem."

"Where most people would throw up their hands and say 'this problem is insurmountable,' he just steps back and tries to come at it a different way."

Added Maria Shriver, Schwarzenegger's wife, earlier this week: "You've got to think outside the box, and I think that's the lesson of Arnold's administration."

On Monday, Schwarzenegger reaped a reward of his tenacity when he signed a bill reforming the workers' comp system which he says will save up to $7 billion for state employers. "The impossible is to be going out, because everything is possible," he said last week. "We just have to have a positive attitude."

Despite his talents before a crowd, much of Schwarzenegger's governorship takes place behind closed doors, and on many days he has no public events. He has even set up a tent in a courtyard outside his office for private meetings where he can smoke cigars or negotiate with legislators.

It is in small meetings that Schwarzenegger has proved himself a master of the deal.

"He is also frankly, one of the best negotiators I've ever met. He knows what he wants, which is differentiated with what he is willing to accept," Brulte said.

"He knows how to engage people of very, very different points of view," the senator continued. "The governor of California is the most well-known person in the world. And yet when you are in a one-on-one meeting with him, he makes you feel you're the most important person in the world."

Schwarzenegger makes ample use of both the carrot and the stick. Oppose him and he will turn to the people with a voter referendum, he sometimes warns.

The threat is not an idle one. Schwarzenegger is a rare politician who will draw a large audience to hear details of state bond financing or insurance reform.

The star of the "Terminator" films shows an easy touch at public events that are carefully scripted. He typically cracks a joke or two, moves to the substance of his remarks, and then beats a quick retreat, often after signing some autographs. He grants few interviews to the political media who might take him off script.

Critics say Schwarzenegger may have charmed many, but he has failed to keep his promises to sweep aside special interests in Sacramento. *Reuters*

SAUDIS carry the body of a victim of a car bomb attack during a funeral in Riyadh, April 22. REUTERS

Saudi security forces kill 3 militants

JEDDAH—Saudi security forces killed three militants in heavy gunfire in the Red Sea city of Jeddah on Thursday, one day after a suicide bombing in the capital Riyadh killed at least five people.

"Security personnel stormed a residential building in Jeddah where a group of terrorists were hiding," state television said.

Three of the terrorists were killed and one was wounded. Two were arrested.

Witnesses reported gunfire in three separate areas of eastern Jeddah. In the Shola district, they said gunmen wounded a driver when they tried to hijack his car, before fleeing to a half-constructed building and opening fire on onlookers.

Police sealed off several streets while officers with loudspeakers tried to persuade the gunmen to surrender.

The violence in Jeddah followed Wednesday's suicide bombing in Riyadh which killed at least five people and ripped the front off a six-story security headquarters.

It was the first major government target to be hit in a one-year campaign of violence blamed on supporters of Saudi-born Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Saudi Arabia's top cleric said on Thursday the people behind the bombing would "burn in hell" for killing innocent Muslims in the attack, which the Islamist group Al Haramain Brigades said it carried out.

"God has promised wrath, damnation, painful torture and an eternity burning in hell for he who deliberately kills a Muslim... Unjustly killing a Muslim is the gravest crime which cannot be atoned," said the kingdom's highest religious authority, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh. *Reuters*

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Voters told: Experience counts most

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra yesterday echoed the call of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines for voters to choose candidates with experience "so as not to expose the country to jeopardy."

This, he said, is what the Parish Pastural Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) of the Bacolod Diocese has been campaigning for.

He said he did not take part in the drafting of a CBCP pastoral letter calling on churchgoers to shun inexperienced candidates in the May 10 vote but said it is very logical to make sure that "we vote for leaders who will know how to run the country."

The prelate said that he would circulate the pastoral letter in all the churches under the Diocese of Bacolod.

"Elections are a crucial moment in our continuing task of nation building. They're a timely opportunity to transform society by electing wise, capable and upright leaders," the CBCP said in its pastoral letter issued Thursday.

Voters have a "right and duty" to "discern and choose candidates" based on the criteria of competence, conscience and program of government, CBCP president Archbishop Fernando Capalla said in the letter.

The pastoral letter is to be read in all Catholic Churches Sunday.

It asks churchgoers to judge candidates on their competence, conscience, and commitment to issues including the family, the environment, illegal drugs and gambling, justice, peace and order and poverty alleviation.

Capalla said "the vigilance and concerted action of ordinary citizens would be the first guarantee of maintaining honest, orderly and peaceful elections."

He also called on the faithful to condemn "corruption in its various forms" including "vote-buying and vote-selling," extortion of political candidates by communist guerrillas, and "misuse of public funds."

Representatives from the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the PPCRV are meeting in Bacolod City Saturday to ensure clean and honest elections in Negros Occidental on May 10, Namfrel-Negros Chair Carmen Benares said yesterday.

The Namfrel-Negros will hold its quick count operation center at the University of Saint La Salle in Bacolod City.

Jose Concepcion, Namfrel national chair, will meet with the Negros volunteers Saturday to outline their tasks as poll watchers and in conducting the vote count.

GMA says she's the only Ilocano bet for president

VIGAN CITY—In a bid to boost her image as the only Ilocano presidential candidate, President Macapagal-Arroyo decided to speak in Ilocano in her sorties here on Thursday.

Former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who is running for governor, and Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson also spoke in the vernacular, much to the consternation of Metro Manila-based reporters covering the President's campaign.

At the Candon Amphitheater in Candon City, which was packed with about 10,000 people, for example, a television crew left while Chavit Singson was speaking.

"Don't look at me, I don't speak Ilocano," a cameraman said before packing up.

Ms Macapagal, speaking in broken Ilocano, said she is the only Ilocano candidate running for president because her mother was from Binalonan, Pangasinan, while her grandfather was from Bacarra, Ilocos Norte.

Her running mate Noli de Castro spoke in Filipino and was greeted with modest applause in Candon City.

"In my brief stay in office, I was able to give progress to your region. The other candidates do not know what you, Ilocanos, wanted," Ms Macapagal said.

Earlier, in Chavit's house in Baluarte here, Ms Macapagal enumerated the projects that she initiated in Ilocos Sur.

These included the P191-million rehabilitation of Sta. Cruz Bridge and Langlangka-Candon bridge that started Thursday, the P840-million Suyo-Cervantes road, the P496-million Cervantes-Sabangan, Mt. Province Road and the P506-million Cervantes-Mankayan-Abatan, Benguet road.

She said that these roads would open up Ilocos Sur's upland communities to tourism and trade.

Ms Macapagal also said forthcoming projects would include the P460-million rehabilitation of the Quirino Bridge and the Amburayan Bridge (P535 million).

"Considering that she visited all barangays in Ilocos Sur, I predict that she will win in Ilocos Sur," Chavit said.

"Being an Ilokana, she will win in Ilocos," Eric Singson added.

Ms Macapagal, during her visit, also paid tribute to Chavit, whose revelations on former President Joseph Estrada's acceptance of jueteng money helped her assume office in 2001.

Ms Macapagal assumed office after Estrada, erstwhile friend and gambling partner of Chavit, was ousted by a civilian uprising in January 2001.

"Without Chavit, there would be no (Macapagal-Arroyo) administration," Ms Macapagal said.

The campaign enters its final days as various groups, including the Catholic Church, seek to push their agenda.

In Dagupan City, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz said only two candidates—presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino and vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro of K-4—had committed to stop jueteng and illegal gambling should they be elected into office.

Cruz said the other candidates did not even bother to answer the letter accompanying the document titled "Word of Honor" much less sign the document. *Frank Cimatu and Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DAY'S START
A worker at a resort in Barangay Binugao in Toril, Davao City starts the day silhuoetted in the rising sun.
BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Court convicts Aglipayan priest, 3 others of coercion

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Bacolod Regional Trial Court Judge Gorgonio Ybañez Wednesday sentenced a priest of the Philippine Independent Church and three other persons to four years imprisonment for forcing two women to perform religious acts to exorcise them of alleged evil spirits.

Ybañez found Fr. Jerry Siason and his companions, Lolita Lastierre, Lilia Lastierre and Milagros Varona, guilty beyond reasonable doubt of grave coercion and sentenced them to suffer six months to four years and two months imprisonment.

However, he acquitted them and their 38 other co-accused of charges for robbery in band.

The complaints filed in court said that on Aug. 1, 1986, the group of Siason forcibly entered the compound owned by psychic healer Wilfredo Tortosa in Barangay Sumag, Bacolod City, by smashing the doors and jalousie windows and ransacking and robbing the house.

They came in a truck, jeep and a tricycle from Bago City supposedly to shake off the demons that had possessed two girls living in Tortosa's compound. Siason and his companions were mostly members of the Philippine Independent Church.

Aurea Gamo and Delfina Villanueva, who were inside the compound when the group of Siason came, accused Siason and his companions of grave coercion for forcing them to go through exorcism rites.

Villanueva said Siason and his women companions surrounded her and made her kneel against her will as they poured holy water on her and prayed for her supposed redemption from evil spirits.

She told the court that Siason, holding a dagger and water, forced her to kneel, and his companions held the image of the Sto. Niño, and made the sign of the cross on her face.

Gamo claimed she was also subjected to the same exorcism rite and was forced to drink holy water by Siason and his companions.

Tortosa filed a separate robbery in band case against Siason and his companions but the judge dismissed the charges saying that the existence of personal property allegedly robbed by the accused had not been sufficiently established.

DENR urged to sue soldiers for illegal logging in protected area

THE BULUSAN protected area.
ABET RAZ/CONTRIBUTOR

By Emir Emano Gamis
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SORSOGON CITY—Several Army men were found involved in alleged illegal logging activities within the Bulusan Volcano Natural Park, a protected area in Sorsogon, but the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the province seems reluctant to prosecute the violators.

The environment watchdog Tanggol Kalikasan in Bicol has called on DENR-Sorsogon to file a "long overdue case" against the culprits who were found to have cut hardwood trees within the Bulusan Volcano Natural Park (BVNP) in December last year.

The 3,673-hectare natural park that sits in Casiguran, Barcelona, Irosin and Juban towns, was proclaimed a protected area in 2000, but its environment, which is home to diverse flora, fauna and aquatic resources, is threatened by illegal loggers and encroachers.

Jun Narvadez, area director of Tanggol Kalikasan-Bicol, said they were monitoring whether the DENR would file a case against a certain Sgt. Lorenzo Domdom and other soldiers under the Army's 2nd Infantry Battalion, 9th Infantry Brigade based in Barangay Anog, Juban, citing that the issue has dragged long enough.

"If they would not file the case, then we might call the attention of Secretary (Elisea) Gozun on the matter," he said.

In a memorandum to Oscar Dominguez,' provincial environment and natural resources officer, Lemuel Soriano, BVNP protected area superintendent, noted that starting Dec. 4 last year, 11 premium hardwood trees, mostly narra, were cut down.

The cutting took place after a certain Jose Gamba of Barangay Tinampo in Irosin donated three trees to the Army to be used in the construction of its headquarters, emphasizing that the military secured first a permit from the DENR, according to Soriano.

On Dec. 4, forest guards in Irosin detected cut trees in two sitios and were told by Domdom that their cutting permit was with their commanding officer, Lt. Col. Romeo Cabatic.

Cabatic has denied knowledge of the logging and said that Domdom and his companions will be "automatically disarmed" and sanctioned.

Soriano also suggested the filing of cases against Gamba, Domdom and his companions.

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Bayan Muna endorses 58 bets on Panay Island

By Nestor Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The party-list group Bayan Muna has declared its support for 58 candidates running for various positions on Panay Island.

In Iloilo City, Bayan Muna endorsed Vice Mayor Victor Facultad and Councilor Vicente Gengos Jr. for mayor and vice mayor, respectively. The group also endorsed eight candidates for councilor from different parties: transport leader Ireneo Aaron Jr.; broadcasters Alvin Dennis Arabang and Ely Estante; lawyers Jose Espinosa III, Dan Cartegena and Janne Batema; and youth leaders Solidad Zaldivar and Julienne Baronda.

Bayan Muna declared its support for the candidates during an assembly here Thursday attended by around 1,000 members of the groups and its allied party-list groups Anak ng Bayan, Gabriela Women's Party, Anakpawis and Migrante.

The group also endorsed candidates coming from 15 towns in Iloilo, two towns each in Capiz, Aklan and Guimaras. The candidates include Gerry Yucon who is running for vice governor of Guimaras and Cecilia Hubag-Capadosa who is running for reelection as Iloilo provincial board member.

Bayan Rep. Siegfred Deduro said the candidates they endorsed were chosen based on their common stand on issues especially on poverty-alleviation, human rights and social justice.

He said the candidates also promised to endorse the group and to give support for campaign materials.

Bayan Muna and its five allied party-list groups, including the Suara Bangsamoro, have been accused by National Security adviser Norberto Gonzales of being front organizations of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing the New People's Army. He accused Bayan Muna of channeling at least P500 million in government funds to the rebel group.

Aside from Gonzales' accusations, text messages urging voters not to vote for the six party-list groups have also been circulating.

Deduro denied the allegations saying they are being subjected to attacks because they have consistently been criticizing the "anti-people" policies of the administration.

Deduro said the "red-baiting" failed to stem the support for their group. He cited the results of a Pulse Asia survey conducted from March 27 to April 4 where Bayan Muna got the nod of 22 percent of the respondents, the highest among around 100 party-list groups.

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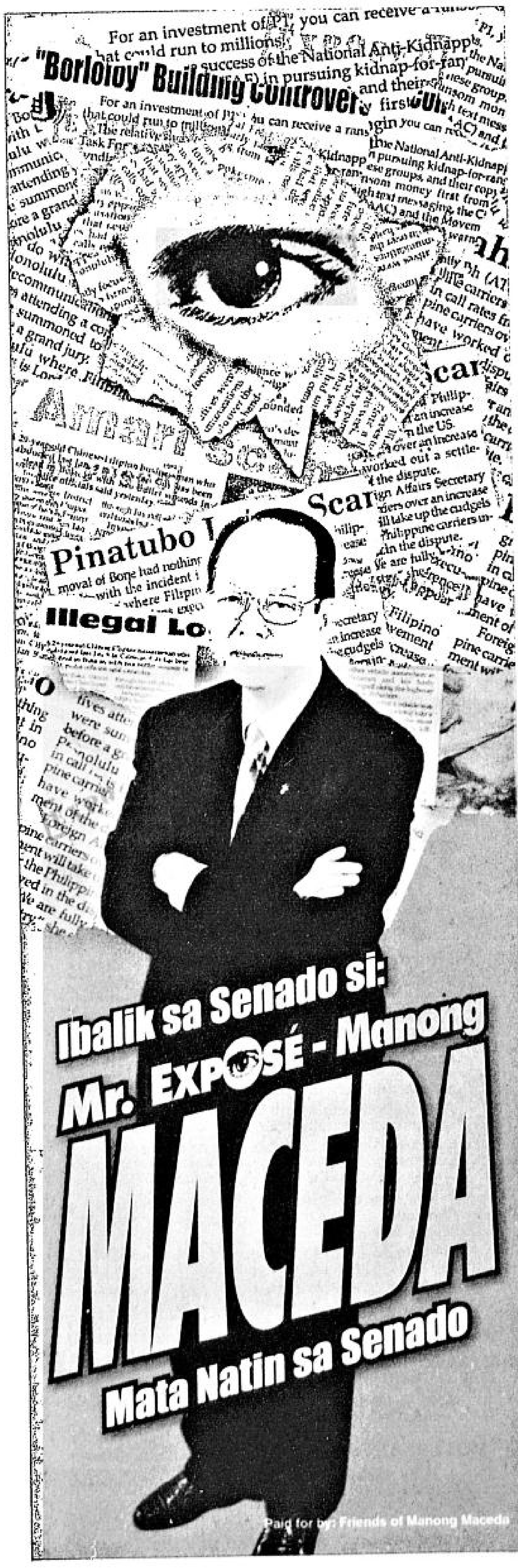
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PNP recommends Comelec control of 7 Cagayan, Cordillera towns

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Police officials in the regions of Cagayan and the Cordillera have recommended seven towns to be placed under the Commission on Elections' control due to intense political rivalry and past incidents of election-related violence.

Supt. Rodrigo de Gracia, Cagayan police director, has asked Hilario Sagun, provincial elections supervisor, to place Enrile and Buguey towns under Comelec control.

De Gracia said on April 15, the house of Claro Arao, a supporter of Enrile mayoral candidate Melinda Arao, was fired at by unidentified men. Police recovered 25 shells of M-16 Armalite rifle and 39 shells of 9 mm pistol near the house.

Arson

Also on April 15, a warehouse owned by Arao's rival for the post, Robert Turingan, was burned by unidentified men. Police recovered a container of gasoline near the warehouse.

De Gracia said during the campaign period for the 1992 elections, at least 15 policemen in Enrile were killed when they were ambushed by communist rebels.

In Buguey, election-related violent incidents were recorded during the 1995 elections. De Gracia said a former Army major and six others were killed in the town when they were ambushed during the election campaign in that year.

Other attacks

Three others were killed in a separate incident when they were attacked by a group led by a son of a politician in Buguey.

In Abra, lawyer Jose Bagwan, Comelec provincial officer, said Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Cordillera police director, has recommended the towns of Bangued, Lagayan, Lacub, Tineg and Danglas to be placed under Comelec control due to incidents of violence during this year's campaign period.

Police and Comelec records showed that cases of poll-related violence and fraud had been reported in various towns of Abra in past elections.

In January and March, candidates for various positions in the province signed a covenant for the holding of honest, orderly and peaceful elections. *Estanislao Caldez and Artha Kira Paredes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Drug suspect stopped from killing self

DAVAO CITY—An alleged big time drug pusher yesterday attempted to commit suicide by slashing his throat with a cutter shortly after he was arrested for possessing shabu worth at least P1 million.

Mike Umpa, 38, of Quiapo, Metro Manila, was arrested in an entrapment operation at the Davao International Airport here around 6:30 a.m.

PO3 Steve de la Cruz, police investigator, said he briefly left the suspect inside the interrogation room of the police's Heinous Crime and Investigation Section (HCIS) to get a bond paper.

De la Cruz said Umpa locked the door.

He said he peeped through a window and saw the suspect slashing his throat.

De la Cruz said he kicked the door open and wrested the blade away from the suspect.

Umpa was rushed to a hospital and was sent back to his cell inside the HCIS after treatment.

He was mum when reporters sought his comment about the charges leveled against him.

The city police's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU), HCIS and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) received a tip that Umpa was bringing in drugs. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

HARVEST BOY CABRIDO PDI PHOTO

A woman shows off a bunch of bananas that she harvested from her farm in Botolan, Zambales. The farms are recovering from devastation caused by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo and lahar flows.

Maguindanao prepares big welcome for GMA

COTABATO CITY—When President Macapagal-Arroyo visits Maguindanao today, she would feel like she is in her hometown in Pampanga, Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan said.

"Maguindanao is synonymous with Pampanga and Maguindanao is now known as GMA country," provincial administrator Norie Unas quoted the governor as saying.

Unas said Ms Macapagal would arrive noon in Shariff Aguak, the seat of the provincial government, not only to campaign but also as special guest and among the major sponsors of the Muslim wedding of Gov. Ampatuan's grandson.

"After the President and the K-4 senatorial candidates would have delivered their speeches, they will grace the wedding rites, a surely historical event for big political clans in Maguindanao," Unas said.

Datu Mohammad Banarin Ampatuan, son of Mamasapano Mayor Datu Akmad Ampatuan and Hadja Bai Rebecca, will marry Bai Amina Mabang Sangki, daughter of Mayor Datu Zacaria Sangki and Hadja Bai Farida Mabang Sangki of Ampatuan municipality.

Governor Ampatuan said all the 27 mayors of Maguindanao were also invited. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Army presence stops theater group's performance

A THEATER group that came all the way from Manila to Bicol was prevented from performing as Army troops descended on the improvised theater venue in the interior Barangay of Busac in Ligao City, Albay.

Only on the second day of its one-week Bicol tour Thursday, the production of the Tag-ani Performing Arts Society was stopped by the presence of some 30 soldiers, who came unannounced in full battle gear in the barangay as early as 5 a.m.

The soldiers prevented the residents in the four adjoining barangays from converging in Busac, according to a news release.

Local leaders said it was an unusual military movement, which must have been prompted by reports that the residents in the nearby barangays were starting to gather and march to Busac. Sensing the tense situation, the residents advised the theater group to withdraw to the Ligao City gym.

Col. Bienvenido Reyes, commanding officer of the 22nd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Tula-Tula, about 2 km from Busac, however, said in a text message to the INQUIRER that the soldiers stopped the activity because of an operation in the area.

He said the halting of the activity was for the group's own good. Besides, he said, it was the duty of the military to prevent their entry into battle zones.

Arnulfo Alvarado, one of the tour coordinators in Bicol, decried that "a rare cultural event for the people's enlightenment had been preempted by a panicky military."

Tag-ani's Bicol repertoire consists of two short plays based on National Artist Amado Hernandez' short stories, "Langaw sa Isang Basong Gatas," which dramatizes the evils of "development aggression" and "Panata ng Isang Lider," depicting the travails of a worker family.

Jo Bisua, Koboronyogan theater federation head, which hosts Tag-ani in Bikol, said the tour was expected to proceed to Legazpi and Tabaco and Iriga and Naga until April 26. *With a report from Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Muslims demand student's release

ILIGAN CITY—Muslims here yesterday urged the government to release a chemistry student of the Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City, who was arrested in March for alleged terrorist links.

Abdulah Dalidig, spokesperson of the newly-formed Free Radz Movement, said Radzmar Sangkula Jul, who is now detained in Manila on suspicion he was part of a plan to carry out a Madrid style bombing in the capital, was never involved in lawlessness.

Dalidig said many people could testify that Jul was "just a student of MSU-Marawi" and not an Abu Sayyaf member, contrary to allegations by police authorities.

Jul was arrested by government agents in Manila on March 26 during the government's national crackdown on terror. *Rex Ortega and Aisha Echavez with a report from Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Hybrid rice does wonders for Isabela co-op

AFTER only two years of operation, the total assets of this cooperative of hybrid rice seed growers in Roxas, Isabela has already reached more than P7 million, which is more than 300 times its initial capital.

This was the result of its collaboration with PhilRice which provides their hybrid rice seeds.

Its members can already afford badly-needed farm equipment on top of meeting their basic needs.

Dr. Vicmar Agustin, a dentist-farmer who chairs the Roxas Hybrid (rice) Seed Growers Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Roxas, Isabela, said in a statement that the cooperative had 120 members and a paid-up capital of P22,500 when it was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on Feb. 15, 2001.

Members of the cooperative buy their farm inputs such as fertilizers and agricultural chemicals from the cooperative. They bring their produce to the cooperative, which in turn sells these to PhilRice, the government agency that is spearheading the country's hybrid rice commercial production program.

Agustin, who devotes three hectares of his farm for hybrid rice seed production (HRSP), said the cooperative facilitates faster marketing and payment of their hybrid seeds since PhilRice is dealing with only one entity rather than so many farmers.

Other than capital share and membership fee paid by the members, the cooperative also derives income from its commission from the hybrid rice seeds of the members—P200 per bag, which is sold to PhilRice at P2,400 each.

Members also pay P1.50 for using the cooperative's seed cleaner. All the members clean their seeds at the co-op office, hence the quality of the seed is guaranteed.

Immediately after cleaning, the seeds are weighed, packed in 20 kg bags, and then stored in the co-op warehouse.

In the dry season of 2002, members of the cooperative harvested 143,220 kg of hybrid rice seeds from 293 hectares. Only a few members produce seeds during the wet season because of brown planthopper infestation, hence, only 22,360 kg were produced in the 2002 wet season.

At P2,400 per 20-kg bag, the total cost of hybrid rice seeds produced was a staggering P19,869,600.

In a span of only two years, the cooperative has already acquired a 505-square meter lot and building worth P1.7 million, which houses the office, work area and warehouse, according to co-op manager Federico Viernes.

INQUIRER Visayas
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

First aid reaches Samar frontier town

By Rolando O. Borrinaga
San Jose de Buan, Samar

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo might have visited and awarded the four police officers wounded in the March 17 raid of New People's Army guerrillas on the town of San Jose de Buan, Samar, at a private hospital during her recent trip to Tacloban City. But the medical personnel who gave post-battle first aid to these officers still suffer from war shock and the town's health programs and schedules remain in disarray a month after the attack.

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Local-based SHS graduates heard the gunfire during the NPA attacks in Calbiga town in May, 2002, in Motiong in November, 2002, and in Quinapondan in June last year.

And when 20 rounds of artillery, 1,000 rounds of machine-gun bullets and hundreds of rifle shots were fired from the government side during a four-hour battle to ward off guerrillas laying siege on the police station and an Army detachment in San Jose de Buan in the morning of March 17, three SHS graduates—a physician, a nurse and a midwife—were cooped up inside their quarters in the town's Rural Health Unit (RHU) building, just 15 meters from the besieged police station.

Wounded in the battle were four police officers, including the chief of police, and a soldier from a similarly besieged camp nearby.

Two civilians died from stray bullets, and another suffered a fatal heart attack.

Hardship assignment

The forest frontier town of San Jose de Buan is a hardship post. Located some 133 km north of Tacloban, it is more than 40 km from the nearest cemented highway.

Its population of about 7,000 is spread out in remote mountain barangays, mostly accessible by trails and footpaths on precarious mountain ridges or under a canopy of forest trees and vegetation, by fording or treading shaky footbridges across streams, by crossing neck-deep rivers, or any combination of these modes.

In such situation, it is easy for a person or a small group of silent hikers to be mistaken for guerrillas or soldiers on patrol.

Time is largely reckoned by the hourly howling of an owl species. And since sunrise, noon and sunset cannot be observed as easily as in the lowlands, the taking of medicines by the sick but less literate patient could pose some problems to the prescribing health personnel.

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Looking back to that DTTB experience, Santiago mused that both idealism and strong will were not sufficient for effective health work in the town. A younger physique that can withstand the rigors of hiking in a difficult terrain is also important.

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A 1998 cluster survey showed only 26 percent of the eligible children had undergone complete immunization. The coverage has tripled since De la Cruz started her work there.

Coordination

De la Cruz was out of town trying to get in the day before the NPA raid. She had been warned not to go, but she forced herself to ride in a vehicle on a "special trip" to San Jose de Buan because of a symposium on drug abuse and immunization for children of Manobo tribes from the hinterlands, both scheduled for March 17.

The vehicle reached only as far as a destroyed bridge a few kilometers from town and she hiked her way to the staff quarters at the RHU.

Everything was set for the activities when gunfire started at around 3:30 a.m. There was a lull of only about 20 minutes in between until the firing finally stopped at around 7:45 a.m., or about four hours later.

When the battle began, De la Cruz rushed to the quarters of the Gloria couple who cowered together in that room. She asked and got permission to hug the people to calm her extreme fear while ground shook with every artillery explosion from the besieged Army detachment a kilometer away.

They used an instrument tray as temporary urinal during the entire episode.

The three SHS graduates could hear the movement and noise of apparent NPA attackers and the moans of the wounded just outside the wall of their room.

The RHU and its staff quarters were spared from the range of fire during the entire fight around the police station some 15 meters away. "Our RHU building did not suffer a bullet scratch from the battle," De la Cruz said.

Post-battle

After the NPA attackers had retreated and the area was cleared by reinforcement troops, the question in every townspeople's mind was: Was the doctor still alive?

To everyone's relief, De la Cruz survived the ordeal. Her parents in Matuguinao were promptly informed about the good news through the Army's radio facilities.

With the help of the Glorias, De la Cruz immediately attended to the wounded police officers and civilians, administering intravenous fluids and giving first aid with available supplies. Seven people were later brought by helicopter to Tacloban.

De la Cruz was too shocked and scared to accompany the wounded to the hospital. She assigned the task to Santiago, the public health nurse, who was similarly shocked.

It was only in the helicopter that Santiago realized that he was wearing only an undershirt, skimpy short pants and mismatched slippers. He had no money in his pocket. After the wounded had been admitted to the hospital, Santiago proceeded to the DOH regional office to borrow fare money for the return trip.

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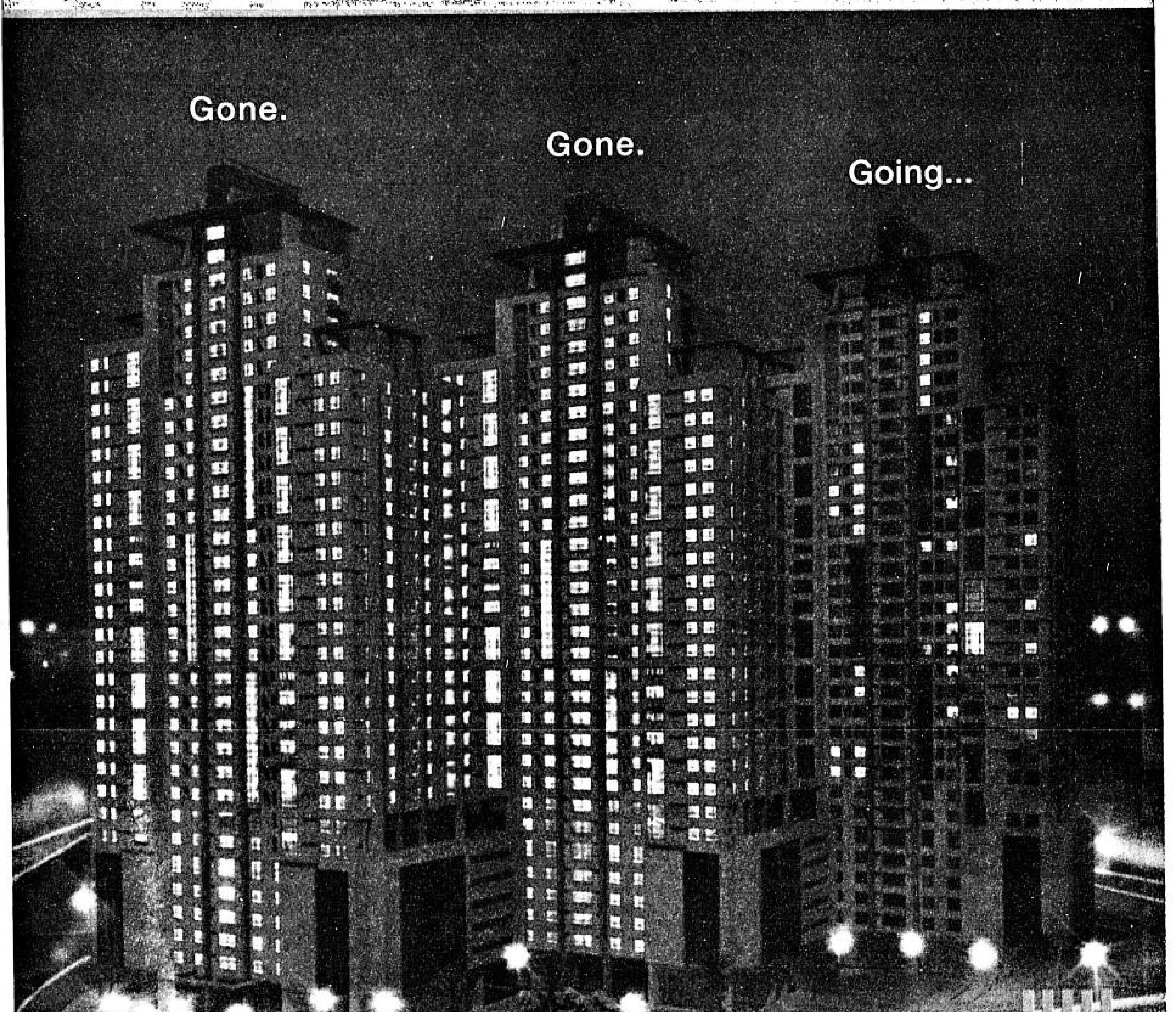

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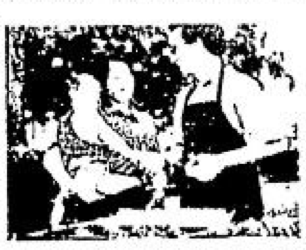

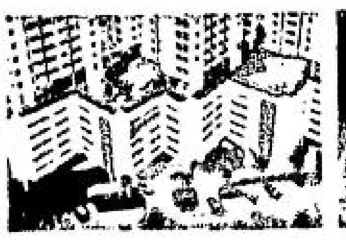

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A 1998 cluster survey showed only 26 percent of the eligible children had undergone complete immunization. The coverage has tripled since De la Cruz started her work there.

Coordination

De la Cruz was out of town trying to get in the day before the NPA raid. She had been warned not to go, but she forced herself to ride in a vehicle on a "special trip" to San Jose de Buan because of a symposium on drug abuse and immunization for children of Manobo tribes from the hinterlands, both scheduled for March 17.

The vehicle reached only as far as a destroyed bridge a few kilometers from town and she hiked her way to the staff quarters at the RHU.

Everything was set for the activities when gunfire started at around 3:30 a.m. There was a lull of only about 20 minutes in between until the firing finally stopped at around 7:45 a.m., or about four hours later.

When the battle began, De la Cruz rushed to the quarters of the Gloria couple who cowered together in that room. She asked and got permission to hug the people to calm her extreme fear while ground shook with every artillery explosion from the besieged Army detachment a kilometer away.

They used an instrument tray as temporary urinal during the entire episode.

The three SHS graduates could hear the movement and noise of apparent NPA attackers and the moans of the wounded just outside the wall of their room.

The RHU and its staff quarters were spared from the range of fire during the entire fight around the police station some 15 meters away. "Our RHU building did not suffer a bullet scratch from the battle," De la Cruz said.

Post-battle

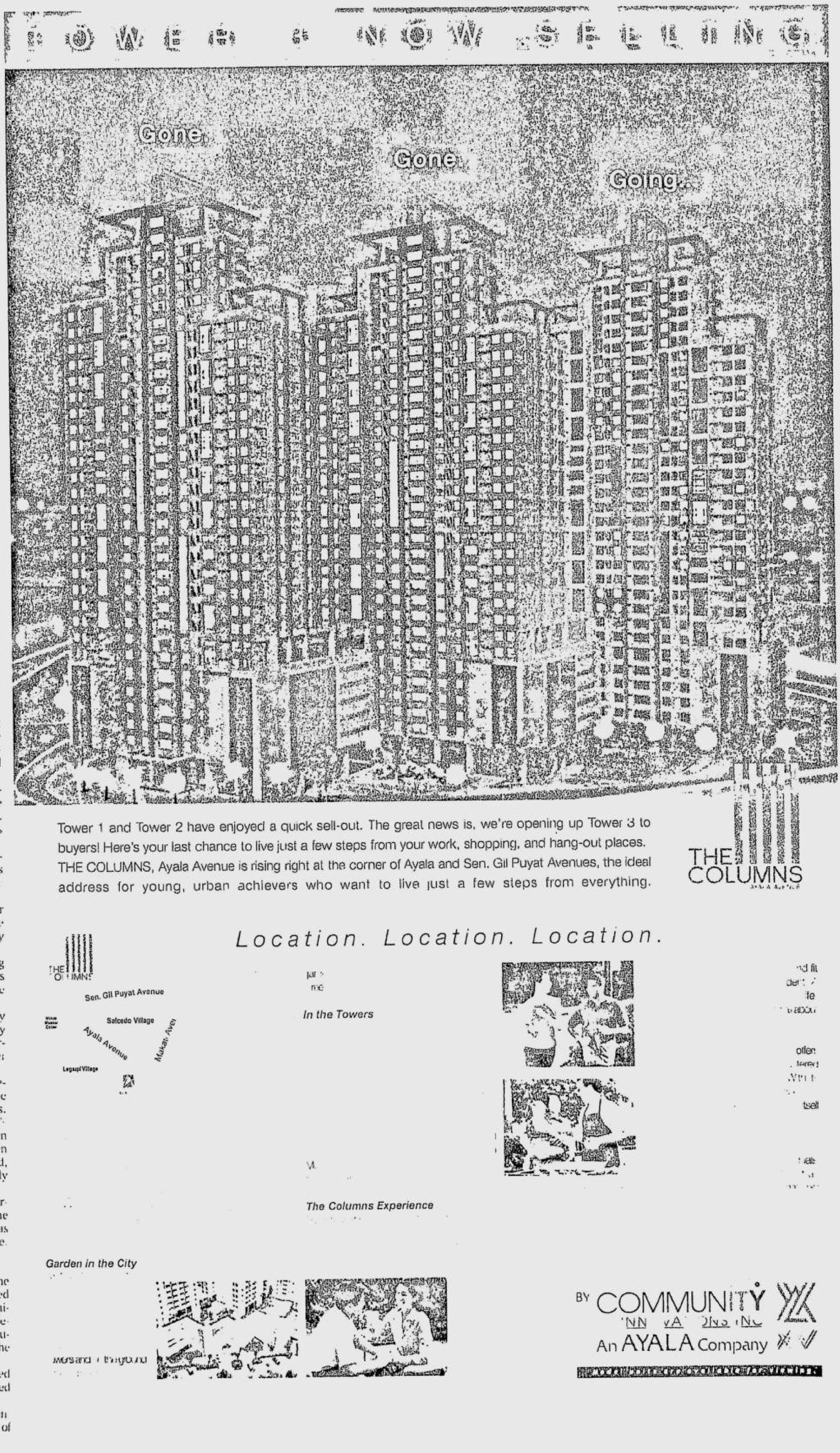
After the NPA attackers had retreated and the area was cleared by reinforcement troops, the question in every townspeople's mind was: Was the doctor still alive?

To everyone's relief, De la Cruz survived the ordeal. Her parents in Matuguinao were promptly informed about the good news through the Army's radio facilities.

With the help of the Glorias, De la Cruz immediately attended to the wounded police officers and civilians, administering intravenous fluids and giving first aid with available supplies. Seven people were later brought by helicopter to Tacloban.

De la Cruz was too shocked and scared to accompany the wounded to the hospital. She assigned the task to Santiago, the public health nurse, who was similarly shocked.

It was only in the helicopter that Santiago realized that he was wearing only an undershirt, skimpy short pants and mismatched slippers. He had no money in his pocket. After the wounded had been admitted to the hospital, Santiago proceeded to the DOH regional office to borrow fare money for the return trip.



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OPINION

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Fatal

EDITORIAL

ELECTION-RELATED fatalities this year have already exceeded the number of casualties during the last elections. And yet, there will be many more deaths to come. In cataloging the number of election-related killings, the crucial point to remember is that a political contest isn't worth a single life.

The majority of election-related deaths involve politics on the local level. It is a legacy of our national experience during World War II, when the proliferation of loose firearms, the breakdown in law and order and the division of the country between supporters of the Allied and Axis causes conspired to justify political murder as acts of patriotism. Unfortunately, there were cases in which prewar political rivalries resulted in leaders killing each other during the war.

This doesn't mean that before World War II, politicians and their followers didn't kill each other. They did. What it does mean is that it became easier to kill an opponent. In the decades since World War II, the transformation of independent guerrilla groups into the nuclei of private armies accelerated and became complete.

For our politicians, life is cheap. This is just an extension of the view that public money and property are their own. The lives of their supporters become their own, to do with as they please, and this includes taking the lives of those who oppose them. This harsh reality indicates the gangster-like nature of many local leaders, and how we have a government of men, and not laws.

The shield of the public, in the face of warlord politics, should be the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces and the national government. A legacy, however, of the perennial anti-insurgency campaigns of the government is that instead of protecting the people, the military, the police and the national government often establish alternative blocs of local warlords, instead of eliminating warlords altogether.

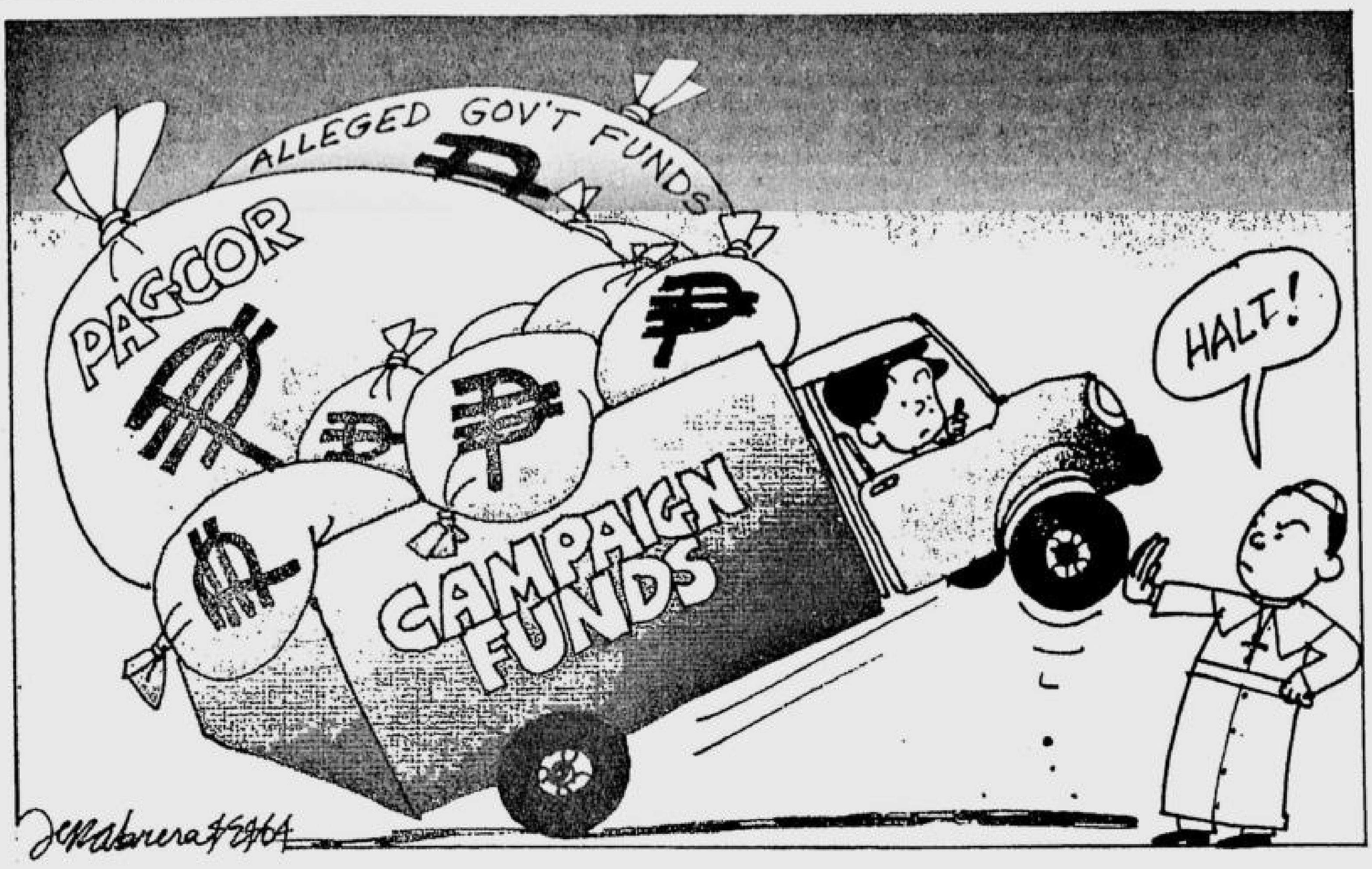
In the end, it is poverty that shackles local communities to warlord dominated politics. A poor people are an easily intimidated people, a people who cannot find the strength to seek redress and right wrongs. It is no coincidence that as communities become increasingly prosperous, the electorate begins to demand impersonal rather than client-based leadership. It finds ways to break the chains of fear and dependency that ties them to violent and unprincipled leaders.

Ali Dimaporo, who died a few days ago, was a case in point. He was the supreme warlord of his time. Through guns, goons and gold, he established and maintained a dynasty. However, as time passed, the family members who succeeded him have used violence less and less. But even Dimaporo, when confronted by one unarmed woman with guts, Haydee Yorac, then a Comelec commissioner, backed down and guaranteed peaceful elections in "his" province. Yorac isn't a woman of wealth or political pedigree, but she is smart—and she takes her rights and duties as a citizen seriously.

While we wait for a future in which private armies become obsolete, we must deal with a reality that more lives will be lost until May 11 and beyond. The media must take the lead in reporting "election-related violence and killings" for what they really are: political murder. The legal profession should take it upon itself to greet the results of the May 11 polls with a flood of cases against politicians and their henchmen who killed in order to achieve victory. Citizens must band together to pursue these cases, particularly on behalf of local communities that are too terrorized to speak up.

Most of all, the spate of political murders present a challenge to whoever becomes president. In a country desperate for examples of political will, punishing murdering officials can be one of the most effective examples of such will. Can a president muster the will to punish warlords, specially those who belong to the winning presidential candidate's party? We can safely say that any president who can do such a thing will reap political support, regardless of how the politicians on the ground actually feel.

But therein lies the challenge: What matters more to a politician, whether president or mayor—is it the yearning for peace and order of the citizenry or the lust for political dominance of their supporters? The answer to this question reveals whether a politician is a leader or merely a thug.



The blemished ballot

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

(LAST week the MLQ University conferred upon me the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa. Following are excerpts from the address I delivered in appreciation and as guest speaker at its commencement exercises.)

"In democratic regimes the choice of important officials in the executive and legislative department, and sometimes in the judiciary too, is entrusted to the electorate. The theory is that the voters who will be performing this delicate task are equipped with the necessary circumspection to ensure the election of only deserving and honest persons who can act for the rest of the nation in the running of the government.

"That is the theory but it does not always conform to reality. The fact is that elections in many countries, and decidedly so in the Philippines, are an erratic and, more than that, an anomalous exercise that falsifies the will of the people instead of validating it.

"This is evident from the hundreds of election protests that are filed after every election with the Electoral Tribunals, the Commission on Elections, and the courts of justice. Not a few of them are decided in favor of the protestants, and many others are eventually dismissed as moot and academic because the disputed term has ended without resolution.

"Worst of all, many of those elected, validly or not, have not proved worthy of the trust reposed in them by their constituents. That is why we have provisions in the Constitution for the impeachment of the President of the Philippines and the recall of local officials...

"Not many of us realize that voting is itself a representative act because the citizen does not vote only for himself when he exercises the right of suffrage. He votes for all Filipinos who cannot themselves vote because they do not possess the required qualifications, like age or residence, or are disqualified by law, like being sentenced to not less than one year imprisonment.

"The constitutional qualifications for the exercise of the right of suffrage are supposed to guarantee the legitimacy and wisdom of elections in this country. But this is one of the fantasies of democracy. One has to be incredibly naïve to believe that every elective official in this country, now and in the past, has been elevated to his position by the free will of his constituents.

"Notably, the ability to read and write is no longer required of the qualified voter under our Constitution. Literacy cannot be imposed now on the right of suffrage. This ability was originally regarded as a minimum guaranty of intelligence to ensure the proper exercise of the right to vote, but not any more. Even morons now have the right of suffrage and, indeed, also to run for President of the Philippines.

"In my view, there are three kinds of voters who have prevented the right of suffrage from becoming an effective instrument for the ascertainment of the wise collective will of the people.

"The first is the voter who prostitutes his suffrage by selling it to the highest bidder. The second is the voter who does not exercise his right himself but leaves it to others to tell him how to vote. And the third is the voter who directly decides whom to vote for but without exercising the intelligence and independence expected of the conscientious citizen.

"Vote-buying is rampant in this country not only because there are candidates who are willing to buy but also because there are voters who are willing to sell. The ballot has become an increasingly expensive commodity over these many years. What makes this practice especially odious is that the candidate who wins because of his blemished votes will recoup his investment through graft in office, and the greater the investment, the greater the corruption.

"The profit motive is a noxious ingredient of the public office in this country; some of our officials are less effective as such than as business speculators on the financial potentials of their office.

"The second kind of voter is the religious fanatic. There are some supposedly spiritual groups that have become powerful political forces because they are able to order their followers how to vote. These devotees vote as directed by their high priests whose command is proclaimed as religious doctrine that must be obeyed on pain of excommunication or the fires of hell...

"No less regrettable, if not more so, is the voter who submits to the persuasions of the mass media, particularly the tabloids, movies and television. These are the idolaters of the presumptuous entertainers who seek elective office on the strength alone of their tinsel attractions.

"These entertainers have nothing to show except make-believe heroism and scripted dialogue, but the *bakya* crowd idolizes them because they are the stars of its favorite dramas. The members of this impressionable group have idiotized our polls with the election of several clowns before, and more of them may be elected this May.

"Together, these three kinds of voters pose a serious threat to the integrity of our democracy. Unless the responsible citizenry takes steps to resist them, their malignancy may emasculate our government to a sterile republic in the hands of ignorant and inept if not also dishonest and tractable leaders."

Revisiting the Chiong murders

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

WHEN Marianne del Gallego first heard the news that Francisco "Paco" Larrañaga was being arrested as a suspect in the murder of the Chiong sisters of Cebu (Jackie and Marijoy), she laughed as she talked to her father about it. She thought it was silly. She was sure that there was a mistake and that Paco would be immediately removed as a suspect—because she was, along with several others, at a party with Paco in Quezon City on the night of July 16, the night the Chiongs disappeared. She even had pictures of the party to prove it, some taken by Raymond Garcia, the son of then Cebu Mayor Alvin Garcia.

Why was she so sure of the date? In her case, it was easy. She had just celebrated her birthday on July 14, and part of her birthday gift was a trip to Manila to be with two younger sisters. She couldn't leave on July 15 because it was the birthday of yet another younger sister, and there was a party at the Cebu Casino Español. So she left the next day, July 16. Her arrival was a second excuse for a get-together of Cebuanos at a restobar in Quezon City, as a *bienvenida* for her; the other excuse being that it would also be a *despedida* for Paco, who was leaving for Cebu the next day in anticipation of his mother's birthday.

The others at the reunion, sons and daughters of respected community members in Cebu—doctors, business persons, civic as well as political leaders—were sure that Paco would be cleared once their story was told.

The classmates and teachers of Paco, when they learned of his arrest (the officers of the CIDG went to fetch Paco at the Center for Culinary Arts in Katipunan, Quezon City) were equally sure that he would be immediately cleared. After all, July 16 had been an exam day, and Paco was with them the whole day as well as on the morning of July 17, when they had taken a practical exam on skills with knives.

One can imagine the shock and dismay of these young people when Paco was formally charged, in spite of their protestations of his innocence. Prevailing public opinion ran high against the boy and his co-accused, fanned by media that were putting a rich vs poor, a powerful vs powerless spin on the stories. This of course was a gross exaggeration, because the parents of the Chiongs were by no means poor or powerless. Dionisio Chiong had a managerial position with businessman Peter Lim (who was the subject of a congressional investigation involving drugs), while his wife was the sister of the appointments secretary of then President Estrada.

To make matters worse for Paco, there was the matter of his being half-Spanish (his father was a former pelotari), which in some people's minds gave the whole controversy a *tisoy* vs *pinoy* or *tisoy* vs *tsinoy* flavor. And to top it all, Paco is an Osmeña, his maternal grandmother being the sister of Serging (father of Senator Serge and Cebu City Mayor Tommy) and Emilio (father of Senator Sonny and former Cebu Governor Lito).

Why was the Osmeña factor a big minus rather than a big plus for Paco? Two reasons: For one, any statement by the investigators or anybody else in his favor was immediately suspect as a sign of not only toadying to the rich, but also toadying to the powerful Osmeña clan. When Mayor Alvin Garcia declared his belief that Paco was innocent, the immediate conclusion was that it was because of his closeness to Tommy Osmeña, whom he had served as vice mayor. Thus, the declaration of Alvin's son Raymond Garcia that he was at the Quezon City party with Paco, 600 kilometers away from where the kidnapping of the Chiong sisters occurred, was considered politically motivated. (Ironically, Garcia and Tommy Osmeña ran against each other in 2001, and are running against each other now—but Garcia and his son Raymond still stoutly maintain that Paco is innocent.)

The second reason why the Osmeña factor was a big minus for Paco was that his relatives, being political figures, probably thought it was politically incorrect to defend him, no matter his innocence, so none lifted a finger. The boy was left twisting in the wind.

The father of Marianne, Juan Miguel "Cuco" del Gallego, stood up for his daughter's story and for Paco, but given the force of public opinion, it was like spitting in the wind. So he counseled the young people that the truth would come out during the trial.

But the trial turned out to be a traumatic experience. The young people were either not allowed to testify, or their testimony were cut short and declared irrelevant. And they watched as other testimony that would have proved Paco's innocence were also disregarded or not allowed, e.g., the logbook of the security guard in Paco's apartment showing that he left in the evening of July 16th and returned at two in the morning of July 17th. Paco and his co-accused were found guilty and sentenced to double life terms.

In spite of the shock, dismay and horror of the arrest and trial, Cuco assured himself and those who knew that Paco was innocent, that the Supreme Court, in its review of the case, would reverse the decision of the lower court. But to their astonishment and disillusionment, the Supreme Court, two months ago, not only affirmed that decision, but raised the penalty to death.

Which is when Cuco and the young men and women who firmly believe that justice has been denied Paco, began their crusade for truth to prevail. But that is for another column.

The turtle and the hare

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE CAMPS of all the political rivals of President Macapagal-Arroyo as well as various other groups against her are planning to stage a rally on Labor Day to protest what they allege is the administration's misuse of government resources in her election bid. The rally will doubtless be funded by the opposition in order that it would be big, as it may be their last chance to stop what seems like a bandwagon for her.

There are two problems here. One is that the accusations about election overspending may be debatable as they pertain to services that went to the people, such as the Patubig program. As the Star noted in an editorial, where does one draw the line between providing basic services and election spending? Then, too, with the results of the Pulse Asia and now the SWS survey of April 10-17 showing GMA pulling away from her closest rival, FPJ, and leaving her other rivals near the bottom, it would look like they're all ganging up on her. This could elicit sympathy votes for GMA.

* * *

Sen. Joker P. Arroyo, commenting on GMA's breakthrough in her election bid, says it reminds him of the story of the turtle and the hare. At the start of the campaign last January, Joker noted, the polls showed that GMA had 26.5 percent of the votes against FPJ's 36.3 percent. GMA was the turtle and FPJ the hare. Now, notes Joker, she has 34 percent compared to FPJ's 31 percent in the latest Pulse Asia survey, while the latest SWS survey had her with 35.3 percent compared to FPJ's 30.8 percent. "Slowly but steadily, GMA overtook him, and the momentum is now on her side," said Joker. "The once invincible FPJ now faces an uphill fight."

* * *

What's evident is that as GMA picked up slowly over the last four months, FPJ began going down. Although he still maintains a sizable lead of 12 points in Southern Luzon, this is neutralized in the Visayas where GMA leads by 30 percent, and in Mindanao by 7 points. Apropos to this, Senate President Franklin Drilon reports that a recent survey in Iloilo of 1,200 respondents showed GMA with 62.4 percent against Raul Roco's 10.9 percent, FPJ's 9.5 percent and Panfilo Lacson's 6.4 percent. Significantly, in the NCR, the traditional stronghold of the opposition, GMA now leads FPJ by one point, and this will probably go higher as Mayors Lito Atienza and Feliciano Belmonte neutralize the campaigning for FPJ by Makati's Jojo Binay and Pasay's Peewee Trinidad.

The Standard said Roco's rating in the SWS survey fell sharply because of his ill health and absence from the campaign, and that his votes went to GMA. Apparently despite repeated assurances that he will return to the hustings, voters have already written off Roco.

* * *

In the vice-presidential race, KNP candidate Loren Legarda seems to have plateaued between 35 and 39 percent in the past three months, while Sen. Noli de Castro has been going down from his high of 57 percent in February to nearly 44 percent now. The two have traded accusations during the past two weeks, and this seems to have hurt them both. This can be gleaned from the increase of undecided votes from 8 percent last month to 13.9 percent this month, an indication that some voters are agonizing over their choice for vice president.

Kabayan seems to have been hit more by allegations against his integrity and family life especially in the NCR where Legarda leads him by 8 points. But curiously, as some pundits have noted, Legarda seems to elicit a very strong dislike among those voters who are not for her. As one observer put it, *pag ayaw kay Loren, ayaw na ayaw talaga*. While Kabayan's rating goes down, what's propping him is GMA's strength in the Visayas, putting him ahead of Legarda by a whopping 28 points. This is bad for her, considering that she traces her roots there, but she makes up for it with her superior organization.

* * *

Drilon recently told me that studies have shown that voter recall is so poor that in the rural areas most of the ballots cast only carry the names of four to six (out of 12) senatorial candidates. In the more urbanized areas in the provinces, the ballots have six to eight names, while in urban centers such as the NCR, they have eight to 10 names. This, he said, makes the senatorial candidates very dependent on sample ballots. I may add that in this election, the voters appear unwilling to vote a straight ticket. Instead they will vote for a mix of candidates.

* * *

In the recent SWS survey, coming into the Magic 12 are six from K-4 and six from the KNP, while hovering in the twilight zone from the 13th to the 24th slots are five K-4 candidates, four KNP, two independents and one Reporma. It's sad that Senators Robert Barbers and Rodolfo Biazon are being edged out of the Magic 12 by the likes of Jinggoy Estrada and Jamby Madrigal of the KNP, simply because Jinggoy is an Estrada while Madrigal uses Juday Santos to bolster her chances. I'd like to plug for Barbers who has consistently displayed a lot of courage. In fact, he was one of the few senators to press for a vote on the Senate committee report detailing the activities of Senator Lacson and his key officers in connection with the accusations made by Mary Ong and other witnesses, although his efforts were blocked by the opposition. I'd like to plug, too, for our PMA "mistah" Biazon who has been a consistent voice of common sense and independence in the Senate.

I also note that independent senatorial candidates with no money and machinery, such as Heherson Alvarez, and Frank Chavez of Alyansa ng Pagasa, two very deserving candidates for the Senate, could still make it on account of the large number of undecided voters, which has jumped from 9 percent in March to a whopping 16 percent this month.

Biazon's tales from the campaign trail

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

RE-ELECTIONIST Sen. Rodolfo Biazon has many stories to tell from the campaign trail.

One of them is about an encounter with the municipal health officer and barangay health workers of Malay in Aklan. Because a rational population policy, including reproductive health services, is one of his advocacies, Biazon usually inquires about the state of health services from the people he meets around the country. The news from Malay was not good. The quality and reach of the town's health services, he was told, have suffered greatly from the reduced allocations for health, especially for family planning services.

As proof, Biazon recalled, each of the BHWs held up an empty shoe box where they used to keep their family planning supplies. "*Wala na* (It's gone)," they said simply. But the funds lack was not enough to keep the women from doing what they could to help their communities. When Biazon asked them what they were doing about the problem, the women said they had agreed to contribute, out of their own humble personal funds, P300 each which they would pool and use to buy contraceptive supplies in bulk. And because they would be able to negotiate for a lower price, they would sell the contraceptives to their townsfolk at just 60 percent of the retail price.

"The example of the women of Malay really inspired me," declared Biazon. "I resolved that win or lose, I would go back to Malay and try to help them in whatever way I can."

* * *

NOT all encounters have been positive, the senator is the first to admit.

Once, a woman approached him and asked if she and her friends could hold a "dialogue" with him. "She and about 20 of her friends showed up, and they all turned out to be *sponghado* (coiffed and perfumed)," he recalled. Once seated round a table, the women promptly issued their demand: "Please withdraw your bill (the Reproductive Health Care Act)," the women said, "it is against the teachings of the Church." How did the women know that, Biazon asked. "Have you read the bill at all?" The women admitted they hadn't but that their parish priest had told them so.

"I'm sorry but I will not withdraw my bill," Biazon says he told the sweet-smelling women. "My job as a senator is to serve all Filipinos, including non-Catholic Filipinos, and I believe the bill is for the good of the country and the people." "Then we cannot vote for you!" the women said staunchly.

"I don't give a damn," the tough-talking former general replied. "All I ask is that when you leave this place please do two things for me: Read the bill first before making any judgments, and visit the slums and talk to the people there. Maybe then you will see how our advocacy is for the good not just of Filipinos today but for Filipinos yet to be born."

Biazon then adds with a chuckle: "Someone later told me that the group held a straw vote for senators and Biazon got zero!" But as Biazon has said, he really doesn't give a damn.

* * *

IN THE COURSE of his campaign, says the senator, he's encountered more than adequate proof that the majority of Filipinos believe in the importance of family planning and the right of couples and individuals to choose their preferred method.

In small meetings, he says, he outlines his five major advocacies: reform and modernization of the armed forces, more assertive bargaining in the GATT-WTO negotiations especially for safety nets for our farmers, support to cooperatives, a more aggressive pursuit of the housing program and population and gender-responsive legislation. "Then I ask the people to indicate to me their support for each of these advocacies," he says. While he gets a smattering of applause in each of the four issues (loud support for agricultural safety nets in rural areas, just as strong support for housing among the urban poor), the issue that almost always gets overwhelming applause regardless of the audience is that on population and gender initiatives.

But while ordinary folk have no problems articulating their support for family planning, local candidates "are still afraid," Biazon notes. "They are still intimidated by the local Church leaders," Biazon believes, "so they would rather keep quiet." "This is why national leadership is needed," says Biazon. Local officials still take their queue from national officials, especially on such a still-controversial policy as reproductive health. "If the national leadership would only be more assertive, then local officials would have an 'out,' they could pursue their programs under the banner of a national program and policy."

* * *

THE INTERVIEW with Senator Biazon took place backstage at the Amoranto Stadium during the "Hataw ng Sambayanan sa Halalan 2004," the "grand gathering" of reproductive health advocates. It drew over 15,000 participants who marched from the Quezon Memorial Circle to the stadium to demonstrate not just their support for the issue but their demand that the government channel more resources toward meeting the people's reproductive health needs.

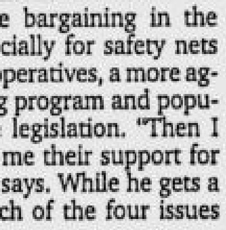
One by one, candidates for local and national office, as well as representatives of various parties, including party-list groups, addressed the enthusiastic crowd and assured them of their support for "repro" health legislation and programs. Entertainers, among them Bayang Barrios, Cookie Chua, Noel Cabangon, and Gary Granada, provided diversion, though most of them also expressed support for this growing movement, in word and song.

Clearly, there is a strong constituency for reproductive health in this country. But for that constituency to find a voice, then brave spokespersons like Biazon need to be brought back to office, there to articulate our views and translate our passions into legislation, funding and services.

Prelude to exile

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



SOME of you, especially graduates of the Ateneo, are aware that sometime in the 200 years of their existence, the Jesuits were banished by royal decree in 1767 from all the domains of King Carlos III (including the Philippines) and had their properties confiscated. What many of us are not aware of were the deprivations suffered by those unfortunate friars. The real reason was political and had much to do with the intrigues in Europe of that period. In the Philippines, they were further accused of preaching against the government and communicating with the British during their occupation of the Islands in order to justify the expulsion.

The decree arrived on May 19, 1768 and at 9:15 a.m., the College of San Ignacio in Intramuros was occupied by two companies of soldiers marching to the sound of martial music. The doors of the school and the church were locked from outside and the priests imprisoned within. The notice of banishment and expulsion was read in all the major thoroughfares and posted in public places of the city. Apparently residents were shocked at such treatment. Some people, prompted by curiosity, went out to see how the church and college looked with soldiers surrounding it, while others avoided passing by the street because they were "sore grieved" by what had happened.

The Jesuits were allowed no communication with the outside world although they were not tortured or treated inhumanely. They could not use their church and could only say Mass in a gallery; afterwards they were also deprived of this. A lot of trouble was taken to ensure that no Jesuit remained outside the convent in Intramuros. Ships were dispatched to the Visayas to fetch the remaining friars from their missions.

On July 1768, 64 of them were chosen to go into exile (the others were too old or sick). They were taken to the Pasig and embarked in three small bancas. But although they left at 5 a.m,. they were unable to board the frigate three leagues away because of the lack of wind. They had neither food nor drink in the boats and none when they boarded the ship where they found their quarters unprepared.

On Aug. 1, they finally weighed anchor but had to stop because some supplies were still lacking. The ship was overloaded as usual. The 64 friars were crammed into a space that could accommodate only 20 people comfortably. After a few days at sea, another 25 soldiers were added. The space was open to cattle, pigs and other animals so that it was not unusual to find pigs settling in with them especially on rainy nights.

Finally on Aug. 3 at 4 a.m., they set sail, reaching the Marianas on Sept. 7. The next day, a fearful storm (called by us *bagyo*, by the Portuguese *tufon* or *tifon* and the Spaniards *uracan*) broke out, and lasted three days and nights. There was so much water inside the boat that waves of it swept over their cots which were on the same deck as the ship's cabin. As the storm kept tossing the ship, their cots split, bundles and chests burst open and rolled from port to starboard along with the baggage and filth and the animals on board. One priest found himself with three pigs in his cot. Unable to get them out, he moved out instead. Another pig joined their provincial, and it was so large and heavy that if one of the ship's officers hadn't dragged it off, it would have smothered the priest!

Everyone tried to bale the water out. But one pump was useless from the beginning of the storm and the other scarcely functioned on the second day. Everyone was exhausted from lack of food, sleep or rest and working tied with ropes so that the waves wouldn't wash them overboard and being beaten continually by rain, wind and waves.

The wind had ripped the sails into shreds on the first day, but the ship was lightened because the goods on the upper deck were thrown out. The mainmast was chopped down and the mizzenmast dropped into the sea. Only two pilots and the boatswain were left to man the ship since everyone else was too ill. Half the bow was already under water.

On the night of the third day, the pilot was heard to remark that he could prolong their lives for four hours at the most since the ship was without a mast, full of water, at the mercy of the winds and buffeting waves and without hope of human succor. That was the length of time the ship could be kept afloat unless a big wave sucked it up or it fell apart first.

Some 400 passengers went to confession to the priests nearest them. No one could move, being wedged in or fastened by ropes and lashing rings so they wouldn't be dashed to pieces or tossed about.

Finally on Sept. 11, the Jesuit provincial died. Everyone was sick because of the storm, their skin peeling because their clothes, wet with sea water, fermented their bodies in the heat and they had no dry clothes to wear. Many suffered from eye flux, which leaves the victims blind for a time and with sharp pains day and night.

The ship had to return to Manila to be refitted. Another hurricane hit them on Sept. 29 and lasted for another three days and nights. One Jesuit died from exposure and fatigue.

On Oct. 8, they sighted the eastern coast of Samar, back in a country where they were not wanted and where the government had sequestered all that they owned.

(*Cushner, Nicholas P., 1964, "The Journals of Francisco Puig, S.J." 1768-1770*)

Personal lessons

YOUNG BLOOD

Sean Cualoping

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT is amazing how one moment can change one's life forever, how one event can lead to another and shape and influence each individual person, and how life is full of strange coincidences.

When my mom was pregnant with me, one of my uncles, who was in Ireland, was diagnosed with encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), a very serious disease which could lead to serious brain damage or even death. My parents were hoping to have a second son, but they prayed to God and made a bargain with Him: In exchange for my uncle's good health, they would settle for another daughter.

My uncle got better, and on Jan. 13, 1986, I was born. My parents were overjoyed since they got their second son. They gave me an Irish name, Sean, which in Hebrew means "gift from God." According to my parents, I was a very pleasant gift for them.

Five years later, I was diagnosed with the same disease that my uncle had contracted. My parents rushed me to the hospital after I suddenly had a seizure. Fortunately, just like my uncle, I recovered without suffering any brain damage.

The next meaningful experience in my life occurred when I was in Grade 2. I had the opportunity to meet the Pope in person, in his private chapel at the Vatican, together with a handful of relatives. Though I was only 7 then, when I saw the Pope enter, I knelt down to pray. I sensed an aura of holiness.

When I was small, I was very naughty. I was said to have slammed the car door on someone's foot, shouted into the hearing aid of an old man and even punched a pregnant woman. I do not know whether all these were true, but I do remember that I was quite a brat in those days. After the trip to the Vatican, I must have toned down a lot. I have heard no stories about any mischief I committed since then. Something from that meeting with the Pope must have inspired me to change for the better.

Another life-changing experience happened to me in February 2001, when I first visited the Chosen Children Village, a home for physically and mentally challenged children. The experience changed my whole perspective on life. Seeing how bad some kids' conditions were, I was thankful for my own blessings. I could have been one of them had I not fully recovered from encephalitis.

But no matter how bad their condition and seemingly greatly disadvantaged they are, these kids look like they are leading a more enjoyable life. Most of them express "pure" emotions. Fortunately or unfortunately, they live solely in the present and have no sense of shame or do not think of consequences. So they have no reason to hide their feelings and are not afraid to express their emotions. An angry child might scream, shout and even hit people without thinking or caring about the consequences. Another who is feeling depressed will simply cry or even hurt himself. But they also experience true happiness. When they are happy, they run, laugh, dance, hug and do just about anything to show their joy. When they express kindness or affection, it is always genuine.

These few experiences helped me learn more about life and taught me to be thankful for my good fortune. Every experience led to many others and each has changed me in a different way.

I am eager to find out what other great experiences are in store for me later in my life. If they are as good as what I have been blessed with so far, then I know I will be living my life to the fullest.

Between two worlds

"I CHUCKLE, painfully aware that 'I'm an American' carries little weight with him," Andrew Pham tells himself, as he speaks to a Vietnam War veteran. His book, "Catfish and Mandala," is his story about the time he went back to his homeland to search for his roots, exorcise personal demons and define his identity.

I enjoyed reading about a different culture. But what intrigued me most was finding any similarities between Pham and myself. Although I am not Vietnamese-American, many of our feelings and quite a few aspects of our different Asian cultures overlap.

Pham's journey into his past allowed him to create conjectures on things like why his transsexual sister committed suicide or why there seems to be a rift in his family. The story showed me the importance of one's past, and inspired me to learn about my own family history.

Pham could not be accepted as "American" by the white Caucasians while he was living in the States. He was seen either as foreigner or a "Viet-kieu" (foreign Vietnamese) by his fellow Vietnamese when he went to Vietnam.

I am in a similar situation. I am Filipino, born and raised in the Philippines, where I have lived for most my life. However, my parents, grandparents and ancestors are, for the most part, Chinese. My Filipino friends do not see me as truly "Filipino" because of my Chinese heritage.

But I am Filipino. I touch my chin after making the sign of the cross. I only need a spoon and fork to eat my meals (no knife). I make the sign of the cross when I pass a church. I "open" and "close" the lights, and sometimes I even say "comfort room" or "CR" instead of "toilet." I can even speak Filipino, although like Pham, when I start speaking, it is apparent that I am not really a "local."

On the other hand, some Chinese relatives cannot accept me as Chinese because I was raised and influenced by Philippine culture. But I am Chinese: I always look forward to getting red envelopes on special occasions. I have been taught that leaving food on your plate is a sin. I am pushed to do well in school and get nothing for doing well and get a scolding if I don't. I am very thrifty. I try not to waste as much as possible. And until I was in high school, a lot of my clothes were too big for me so I would be able to "grow into them" and be able to use them for many years.

At the end of his journey, Pham reaches an epiphany. "I am a chameleon," he says, "and the best chameleon has no center, no truer sense of self than what he is in the instant."

Like Pham, I am somewhere in between the two worlds. Like Pham, I realize that I can never identify with only one of the two worlds. I am a part of both, and I cannot change that. I must accept it and perhaps get the best out of both worlds. I should just be who I am: unique.

Sean Cualoping, 18, is a 4th year high school student at International School, Manila.

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LETTERS

Maynilad's undoing

MAYNILAD and Manila Water both operated under the same harsh economic environment. But only Maynilad failed. Why? The answer is obvious—Maynilad's assumption of the huge MWSS foreign loan without addressing the concomitant exchange rate risk. Maynilad, which had 53 percent of the market based on 2001 sales volume data, "inherited" roughly 90 percent of the MWSS' foreign loan, or $800 million, while Manila Water, with 47 percent of the market, assumed the remaining 10 percent, or $80 million.

The MWSS and the government's committee on privatization may be liable for contributory negligence in not requiring the concessionaires to institute exchange rate hedging. But such measure was Maynilad's primary responsibility, if only for its own protection. It has therefore only itself to blame for its failure to go into such hedging or other means of minimizing risk.

But why didn't Maynilad go into exchange rate hedging, as many Bangko Sentral clients did, before the peso sank to its lowest level? Why did it assume 90 percent of the MWSS' foreign loan if, at the expense of its customers, it would not deal with the accompanying risk? It was just the smart, not naive, thing to do, for Maynilad was after the lion's share of the roughly $400 million unspent and still usable balance of the loan.

The MWSS privatization scheme was grossly unjust to Maynilad's west zone customers. The exchange rate risk on the approximately $500 million foreign loan already spent by the MWSS prior to privatization for the common benefit of all consumers should have been shared equally by them, through loan allocation proportionate to market shares of the east and west zones. Instead, a giant share of the loan went to Maynilad.

Consequently, it had to pay a much bigger concession fee in proportion to its over-allocated foreign loan, to be recovered from its customers through high water rates.

When exchange losses from the Asian crisis exacerbated the situation, it had to ask for a very high rate increase, which, indeed, should not be given due course as it would worsen rate-overcharging to west zone consumers and undercharging to east zone customers.

Somehow, the MWSS has to stop the subsidy by the west zone consumers to east zone consumers, the product of its lopsided allocation of foreign loan to Maynilad.

In the end, Maynilad's getting what it wanted—the bulk of the unused MWSS foreign loan—then doing nothing about the attendant exchange rate risk, proved to be its undoing. It put itself in a situation where the only salvation was to resort to unduly high rate escalation, which should not be allowed—for equity, not populist, reasons. To allow it is to make customers pay for Maynilad's negligence in managing the exchange rate risk.

—MARCELO L. TECSON,
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Let's have a student representative in CHED

THIS is a reaction to the report titled "Proposal to regulate college tuition shelved." by Dona Z. Pazzibugan. (PDI, 4/13/04)

Bro. Rolando Dizon, chair of the Commission on Higher Education, is aware that for 22 years, the majority of colleges and universities abused the tuition deregulation policy. But the CHED has chosen to implement "stricter guidelines on school fee hikes" next school year yet, instead of doing it immediately this year.

I do not get the point why the CHED has to consider the sentiments of the school owners more than the interest of the students. Firstly, the consultation being conducted by the schools is a mere information drive in which parents and students are being grilled to agree on the tuition hikes. Secondly, miscellaneous fees are not treated as an item that needs to be settled with students. Lastly, such consultation does not give students and parents the right to bargain for a lower tuition hike. It is like a kiss-and-tell thing that school administrators do to comply with the requirements of the CHED.

Being a member of the Partido ng Manggagawa-Youth, our stand on the issue is to give students representation in the CHED so that it will also have the perspective of the students. The students, as the majority stakeholders of the schools, should have a say in the policymaking body of the academe for the sole reason that we are the most affected sector when it comes to the rules and regulations that the colleges and universities execute.

Education is a right of every Filipino. If high tuition fee is the only reason why this right cannot be exercised, then education becomes an exclusive privilege of the few elite.

RA 722, also known as the Higher Education Act of 1994, provides that the CHED has the responsibility to "protect, foster and promote the rights of all citizens to affordable quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to ensure that education shall be made accessible to all." This means that the CHED has the right to rule against tuition increases instantly, but I think that it does not explore into that possibility since it cares for school owners more, and little for parents and students.

—CHARLES EDWARD S. CABAÑA,
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TUCP's stand on population issue

THE FRONT-PAGE article on the INQUIRER's March 11 issue titled, "Population bomb takes back seat in May polls," identified the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines as one of the organizations supporting the two-children-per-family program of presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson.

The TUCP has never released any formal endorsement of Lacson's family planning program. His program, in fact, runs counter to the prevailing policy being implemented by the TUCP for its worker-members nationwide. The program in fact respects their right to determine the size of the family they intend to have but educates them about the plethora of family planning choices available.

Local affiliates of the TUCP nationwide have in-house clinics where nurses advise workers interested in learning about family planning and provide services that correspond to the method that the workers choose to follow.

The TUCP has not and will never subscribe to imposing a cap on the number of children each family should have. We, however, are clear in our position that the population should be managed and that the stand on this issue of our national candidates should be clear in their electoral agenda.

The bottom line is we want our workers and their families to be given the right to information and the choice as to the family planning method they wish to follow depending on their health status, economic conditions, as well as on their personal convictions or beliefs.

We hope that this clears the air about where the TUCP stands on this extremely important issue.

—ALEXANDER AGUILAR,
spokesperson,
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THE GROUPS, including the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, mentioned in the article were those that took part in The Social Acceptance Project-Family Planning of the Agency for Economic Development. These groups advocate modern family planning methods, the same methods adopted by Sen. Panfilo Lacson for his aggressive population management program. The article, however, did not say the groups were supporting the two-child-per-couple plan of the presidential candidate.

—NORMAN BORDADORA,
PDI reporter

Choosing to be right

I WOULD like to commend the inspiring Youngblood article in the INQUIRER issue of Jan. 13 titled "Different," which was written by Jonas Soltes, 18, a BS Biology student of the Ateneo de Naga University.

He noted how the youth today are so caught up in going with the trend to the extent that they forget what they ought to be doing. Instead of studying hard, students ask their parents to buy them the latest cellular phones, computers, clothes and the like. Instead of performing well in classes to get the grade they deserve, they cheat and befriend their teachers to get a higher grade, cut classes or don't take their studies seriously.

He strongly expressed his thoughts and sentiments about being different. In spite of all the negative attitudes prevalent these days among the young, he still choose to live by his principle to take the "road less traveled." He said, "To be different is not to be deviant. Being different is doing right when everybody else is doing wrong."

Truly, it is very hard to be different, especially when doing the wrong things has become the order of the day. Nowadays, everybody seems to have a desensitized soul that hinders us from distinguishing what is right from wrong.

It is high time to be different, especially in the coming May elections. As Soltes said, "It is only when one swims against the raging current that changes are made." People should be enlightened and stop tripping on the same stone. People should be responsible enough to really know whom they should vote for and not rely on other people's decisions because our country cannot afford to be run by another phony.

I would like to thank the writer for reminding me to stay on the right path on my journey to life, and for inspiring me to take the "road less traveled." I truly admire his courage to choose to be right when everybody else is doing wrong.

—JENNIFER JOYCE ENDAYA,
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Roco bets say fund misuse can oust GMA

From page A1

nity to show a united front against the administration.

When told that the Metro Manila Development Authority had said that it would not issue a permit for the planned rally on Edsa, he said: "There are other venues."

Provocateurs

In Libmanan, Camarines Sur, actor Fernando Poe Jr. warned that provocateurs could sow mayhem in the planned rally to allow the administration to justify the cancellation of the May 10 elections.

"It could happen. There might be chaos in order to effect this No-El (No Elections) scenario. We could be infiltrated," the standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino told reporters.

But Poe said that if there would be trouble on May 1, it would not come from KNP supporters, whom he described as "very peaceful."

He warned Malacañang: "If there will be a No-El scenario, it won't be just us but [also] the masses who will fight them."

Asked if he would take part in the rally, he said: "I'll have to check my schedule."

But earlier, his campaign manager Sen. Vicente Sotto III was specific: "We will be in Northern Luzon. We will be with [the protesters] in spirit."

Adventurers

In Butuan City, presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson had a different take on the planned rally.

He also said it could lead to a No-El scenario but warned of a crisis that could lead to a government takeover by "the usual adventurous elements" in the opposition.

Lacson said he had received information that the planned rally could be part of the grand plan to destabilize the government, start a national crisis and prevent the elections from happening.

"The usual adventurous elements in the opposition do not want the elections to happen, so there will be destabilization and ... a crisis. They're hoping that if there is no election, somebody could probably sneak in," he told reporters.

Lacson said that, according to the information he had received, the scheme leading to a No-El scenario also included convincing all other presidential candidates to withdraw and have Ms Macapagal stand for election alone.

"We have information that we have yet to validate," he added. "But it seems there is an effort to prevent the elections from happening. There'd be a crisis and someone will take over."

Grand plan

Asked whether the planned rally was part of the No-El plot, Lacson said: "This could be part of that grand plan. I'm not identifying [Alyansa standard-bearer] Roco as the mastermind, but there are some groups who could take advantage toward the end of not having elections."

Asked to name names, he said: "The usual suspects. Who are the usual suspects in these adventures?"

'Celebration, not noise'

In Malacañang, Ms Macapagal called on her political rivals to respect Labor Day.

"We shall celebrate May 1 in solidarity with Philippine labor, in an event that signifies the dignity of the Filipino worker," she said. "I appeal to our people to mark this day in its proper spirit, and not use it for cheap politicking and character assassination."

The President added: "Labor Day is a day of hope, and not desperation. It should be a celebration of the excellence of our workers, and not the noise of partisan attacks."

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said "all preparations" for May 1 were in place. But he could not say if the Joint Task Force Libra had been activated to defend the seat of power.

The elite task force, composed of military and police units, was used to crush the supporters of ex-President Joseph Estrada who mounted a siege of Malacañang on May 1, 2001. The task force has been activated every May 1 thereafter.

"But we will be meeting more," Gonzales said of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security that met yesterday.

He said the opposition should not hold their protest rally on May 1 out of respect for the workers' day.

He refused to say if the government was planning Labor Day rallies to counter the opposition mass action, but said the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, for one, would be holding its Labor Day celebration in Cebu.

The moderate TUCP has expressed support for Ms Macapagal.

2,000 troops

At a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo, Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, chief of the Armed Forces' Public Information Office, also warned of possible agitators at the planned rally.

He said the military was set to deploy around 2,000 troops to support the anti-riot squads from the Philippine National Police.

"We are warning that there might be some agitators that will infiltrate [the protesters'] ranks to stir their emotions, which might eventually lead to violence. That's the usual fear that we have," Lucero said.

But he said the military leadership saw no need to raise the alert status.

"We hope that these groups would be able to police their own ranks and prevent unscrupulous personalities or groups from infiltrating their ranks. We are requesting those who will be participating in this activity to act within the bounds of the law," he said. *Reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora, Juliet Labog-Javellana, and Alcuin Papa*

For 1st time, GMA clearly leads Poe

From page A1

political bosses in the provinces to use their influence and money to herd people into voting for a particular candidate.

Better chances for Poe than Ping

But the polling outfit, in a statement, also said her advantage was still statistically slim, given the survey's three percent margin of error.

"There is no runaway winner at this stage ... There is still a lot of uncertainty," said Ismael Pili, head of equities research of investment house J.P. Morgan.

A last-minute decision by Ms Macapagal's opponents to give way to the strongest candidate among them and unify is also a potentially pivotal factor, analysts said.

But such acts of self-sacrifice appear almost nil at this fairly late stage of the game, said an official of a foreign brokerage house, who asked not to be identified.

"Politics is always egos," the official said.

SWS said a unified opposition "would be more capable of winning the presidential election if it is Panfilo Lacson rather than Fernando Poe Jr. who withdraws from the race."

If Lacson withdrew, about 4.8 percent of his voters would switch over to Poe while 2.1 percent would swing over to the President, it said.

"This would give FPJ 2.7 percent more than GMA, cutting down his survey deficit of 4.5 points to only 1.8 points, which would already be a statistical tie," SWS added.

It said that a Poe withdrawal would not boost Lacson's chances of winning as the former national police chief would remain still 20.6 percent behind Ms Macapagal.

Roco's departure helped GMA

Mangahas and most of the analysts reached by the INQUIRER agreed the abrupt departure from the political scene of Alyansa ng Pag-Asa's Raul Roco helped boost Ms Macapagal's ratings.

Philippine stocks leaped to a three-year closing high yesterday when results of the SWS survey came out. *(Story on Page A1)*

"Foreign investors and local ones are becoming optimistic with what appears to be the emerging trend that probably 'Da King' will have a hard time at the polls," said Westlink Global Equities analyst James Lago, referring to Poe.

With elections almost around the corner, Dr. Tereso Tullao Jr., an economics professor at De La Salle University, doubted the fragmented opposition still had time to put up an effective common front against her.

"I don't think that within two weeks, they can formulate a reasonable and acceptable economic and social program," Tullao said.

"She (Ms Macapagal) is leading and this can convince the undecided and those politicians who are still thinking twice and want to support a winner, to support GMA," he said.

Big wins in 2 regions erase lead

Still, the opposition has a chance to quell the Macapagal fire.

"It's still a touch and go thing," said Pear's Gatmaitan.

He said Poe had a genuine chance of victory if he could win big in Luzon and in Metro Manila, the latter a traditional opposition stronghold.

Big wins in those two regions would wipe out any advantage Ms Macapagal would have in the Visayas and even, say, in Mindanao, where the Poe camp claims strong support.

"Metro Manila plus Luzon can overwhelm any Visayas and Mindanao vote unless it's overwhelming in those two areas (for GMA)," he said.

'Control votes'

This is where the factor of the so-called "control votes" of political clans could play a decisive role, he said.

"The determining factor will be where (they) go," Gatmaitan said.

"These are the Marcoses in the north, the Ortegas, and the remnants of the Dimaporo family in the south," he said. "About 30 political clans all over the country are going to determine how the election will go."

Although they can be beholden to whoever sits in Malacañang, these long enduring political clans have proved themselves to be politically astute, too.

Balancing act

Their judgments during presidential elections would depend not only on their own short term interests, but on what their constituents also want. After all, the survival of their political dynasties ultimately depend on support from their own backyards.

"It depends on how the Palace treats them, of course, but it also depends on the sentiments of the people below," Gatmaitan said.

"If, for example, Gloria is strong in the Visayas or FPJ is strong in Luzon, they (the clans) cannot ignore that.

They will have to balance that."

No Bandwagon effect

"The political clans are smart," Gatmaitan added. "These clans are well off. *Maski utang yan, pwede.* For example, if they decide to favor a political candidate, *sila ang gagastos. Ang singil naman doble-doble*...The decisive factor will come from these families."

Gatmaitan doubted that the latest survey, by itself, would be enough to create a bandwagon effect that would drive hordes of still undecided voters to go to the President's side.

"The bandwagon will be determined by propaganda, not by surveys," he said. "How are you going to project (survey results) is what matters."

JP Morgan's said the big number of undecided voters "could be a potentially large swing factor."

Uncertainty persists

"There's still uncertainty because if you have a close two-way race as we saw in Taiwan, accusations of fraud and cheating, supporters could bring their arguments to the streets," he said.

Asked if surveys late in a campaign showing one candidate ahead of another could trigger a bandwagon effect, Pili said: "These polls could create self-fulfilling prophecies."

Davide to investors: No need to fear high court

From page A1

where it had no expertise.

Investors in the Philippines should not fear its judiciary, Davide said in a speech he gave before businessmen attending a seminar on the "Enforcement of Corporate Governance in Apec Economies" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

A copy of the Chief Justice's speech was made available to court reporters.

Davide said the recent decisions—among them the voiding of the Piatco consortium's contract for the Naia's Terminal 3—were made by the high court in order to uphold the law and ensure a level playing field in business.

"Indeed, corporations doing business in the Philippines should not fear judicial oversight of its actions because first, it is not an arbitrary power but one that is circumscribed by the constitutional requirement of a justifiable controversy; and second, the same is a necessity in creating a sound business climate founded on the rule of law," Davide said.

But he defended the high court's resolute efforts to "instill corporate discipline and adherence to the rule of law in its deliberations concerning cases with an economic or business dimension."

"The Supreme Court is sensitive to the need for good governance as a prerequisite to lasting economic growth. For this reason, it will continue to uphold the rule of law and the cause of predictable and stable jurisprudence in our country," said Davide, quoting another Supreme Court justice.

Dialogues with business

But he acknowledged that the high court was aware that investor confidence may have been "stirred, if not shaken" by some of its decisions.

DAVIDE

Davide said the tribunal was trying out a "more direct, hands-on approach" by reaching out to the business community through "dialogues" with chambers of commerce and industry groups.

He said the interactive nature of the dialogues made for a better understanding and comprehension of the rulings of the court affecting business decisions.

He pronounced the results encouraging. He said business people appear to have a better appreciation now of the court's efforts at "leveling the playing field" for investors, both local and foreign.

They also appear to appreciate the need for "caution against engaging in ruinous competitive short-cuts and questionable transactions that, inevitably, will result in the legal vulnerability of their investments," he said.

Disclosure policy

Davide said the high court is also studying a proposed "disclosure policy" and judiciary-media relations manual to enhance transparency in the courts.

"When these policies are finally adopted and carried out, criticisms against the court's so-called usurpation of the decision-making powers of the executive and legislative departments in purely economic areas are expected to be muted," he said.

Davide said the court decisions setting aside the contracts for the PEA-Amari, Piatco and the Commission on Elections' poll automation deals have "brought undeserved opprobrium on the court's head."

Safeguard for economic limits

"The Court's efforts to safeguard the economic parameters of what can and cannot be lawfully made subject of commercial wheeling and dealing have been interpreted by its detractors as unwarranted interference in purely economic areas over which the judiciary is perceived to have little or no expertise and, therefore, should rein in its alleged penchant for unjustified intrusion," Davide said.

He justified the court's action, saying the contracts involved were "not run-of-the-mill cases" but billion-peso contracts that the court set aside because of fundamental flaws.

"A common thread that runs across the woof and warp of the controversial contracts is the almost cavalier regard for sacrosanct constitutional limitations and legislative or executive caveats and restrictions," Davide said.

RP stocks soar to 3-yr high due to Wall Street gains, SWS poll

From page A1

telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"Investors are upbeat about first quarter earnings given that a number of companies are declaring cash and stock dividends," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp.

"Investors also took their cue from Wall Street, PLDT and news that (President Gloria) Arroyo has widened her lead in the presidential race," he said.

Confidence

Wall Street's advance and PLDT's hefty gain helped sustain confidence following last Monday's decision of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)—the biggest US pension fund—not to withdraw its investments in the Philippines, analysts said.

PLDT rose 75 pesos to 1,150, its highest close since July 1999, on volume of 211,930 shares.

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"The foreign money positioning ahead of the election results that was trickling in a few weeks ago has turned into a flood," Lago was quoted by Dow Joness Newswires as saying.

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"We continue to believe (the market's rise) is signalling an (Macapagal) victory in the May 10 elections, the market-friendly outcome," ING Financial Markets said in a daily note.

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The presidential palace was euphoric over the survey results, Poe was fairly defiant while Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he'd rather talk about other things.

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"We shall deliver on the rising expectations and hopes of the people—by bringing more jobs, more college scholarships, clean water and health needs," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

The President issued the statement after the SWS survey of April 10 to 17 showed that 35.8 percent of voters favored her against chief rival Poe's rating of 30.8 percent. The survey has a margin of error of three percent.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson placed third with 10.6 percent, overtaking for the first time the ailing ex-education secretary Raul Roco, who was fourth with 8.4 percent.

The mood at the Palace was one of rejoicing.

The President, campaigning yet again in Pangasinan, said there was now a "trend" in her favor. Her officials proclaimed a "bandwagon" of support was on her way.

"The nation is strongly unifying in the fight for change for the average Filipino," the President said, echoing her campaign line.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said the steady rise in the President's ratings was due to her record of performance, her morality and her platform.

"In fact, even if some people do not agree with her position on family planning and death penalty, she is unperturbed because of her morality," Saludo said.

Saludo said it was not surprising that the President had taken a clear—though still slim—lead in the survey.

He said that even the business community, including the Makati Business Club and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, was supportive of Ms Macapagal.

Like dodging bullets

Poe, campaigning in Libmanan, Camarines Sur, dodged the results of the SWS survey like he was the Poe of his movies, dodging bullets.

He said his campaign would go full steam ahead.

"*Inumpisahan ko, tatapusin ko*(I started it, I'll finish it)," he told reporters.

As far as Poe was concerned, the survey results were nothing to worry about.

"It has not changed," Poe said when asked if his confidence was affected.

"Why are they afraid of me?" he asked, adding, "That has been the case even before."

"They're ahead of surveys and yet I'm wondering why they are panicking," he said, without elaborating.

"Do they know something I don't?"

Doesn't care

Sen. Panfilo Lacson simply didn't care.

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"She's getting 40 percent in Mindanao. We don't see that."

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PLDT is set to report its first quarter results this May despite expectations it may report income at more than P4 billion, market sources said.

Good for blue chips

"Investors are positioning for better first quarter results. We think it's going to be a good first quarter for most blue chips," Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment said.

Reuters said the local market's vault was sparked by strong gains on Wall Street and the SWS poll showing Ms Macapagal ahead in the presidential race.

"The market favors the current administration," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

"It seems the market's run-up is already a vote of confidence for Arroyo and the recent survey galvanizes the belief that the economic programs could be sustained in the next six years." *With reports from AP, Agence France-Presse*

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Roco bets say fund misuse can oust GMA

From page A1

nity to show a united front against the administration.

When told that the Metro Manila Development Authority had said that it would not issue a permit for the planned rally on Edsa, he said: "There are other venues."

Provocateurs

In Libmanan, Camarines Sur, actor Fernando Poe Jr. warned that provocateurs could sow mayhem in the planned rally to allow the administration to justify the cancellation of the May 10 elections.

"It could happen. There might be chaos in order to effect this No-El (No Elections) scenario. We could be infiltrated," the standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino told reporters.

But Poe said that if there would be trouble on May 1, it would not come from KNP supporters, whom he described as "very peaceful."

He warned Malacañang: "If there will be a No-El scenario, it won't be just us but [also] the masses who will fight them."

Asked if he would take part in the rally, he said: "I'll have to check my schedule."

But earlier, his campaign manager Sen. Vicente Sotto III was specific: "We will be in Northern Luzon. We will be with [the protesters] in spirit."

Adventurers

In Butuan City, presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson had a different take on the planned rally.

He also said it could lead to a No-El scenario but warned of a crisis that could lead to a government takeover by "the usual adventurous elements" in the opposition.

Lacson said he had received information that the planned rally could be part of the grand plan to destabilize the government, start a national crisis and prevent the elections from happening.

"The usual adventurous elements in the opposition do not want the elections to happen, so there will be destabilization and ... a crisis. They're hoping that if there is no election, somebody could probably sneak in," he told reporters.

Lacson said that, according to the information he had received, the scheme leading to a No-El scenario also included convincing all other presidential candidates to withdraw and have Ms Macapagal stand for election alone.

"We have information that we have yet to validate," he added. "But it seems there is an effort to prevent the elections from happening. There'd be a crisis and someone will take over."

Grand plan

Asked whether the planned rally was part of the No-El plot, Lacson said: "This could be part of that grand plan. I'm not identifying [Alyansa standard-bearer] Roco as the mastermind, but there are some groups who could take advantage toward the end of not having elections."

Asked to name names, he said: "The usual suspects. Who are the usual suspects in these adventures?"

'Celebration, not noise'

In Malacañang, Ms Macapagal called on her political rivals to respect Labor Day.

"We shall celebrate May 1 in solidarity with Philippine labor, in an event that signifies the dignity of the Filipino worker," she said. "I appeal to our people to mark this day in its proper spirit, and not use it for cheap politicking and character assassination."

The President added: "Labor Day is a day of hope, and not desperation. It should be a celebration of the excellence of our workers, and not the noise of partisan attacks."

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said "all preparations" for May 1 were in place. But he could not say if the Joint Task Force Libra had been activated to defend the seat of power.

The elite task force, composed of military and police units, was used to crush the supporters of ex-President Joseph Estrada who mounted a siege of Malacañang on May 1, 2001. The task force has been activated every May 1 thereafter.

"But we will be meeting more," Gonzales said of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security that met yesterday.

He said the opposition should not hold their protest rally on May 1 out of respect for the workers' day.

He refused to say if the government was planning Labor Day rallies to counter the opposition mass action, but said the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, for one, would be holding its Labor Day celebration in Cebu.

The moderate TUCP has expressed support for Ms Macapagal.

2,000 troops

At a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo, Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, chief of the Armed Forces' Public Information Office, also warned of possible agitators at the planned rally.

He said the military was set to deploy around 2,000 troops to support the anti-riot squads from the Philippine National Police.

"We are warning that there might be some agitators that will infiltrate [the protesters'] ranks to stir their emotions, which might eventually lead to violence. That's the usual fear that we have," Lucero said.

But he said the military leadership saw no need to raise the alert status.

"We hope that these groups would be able to police their own ranks and prevent unscrupulous personalities or groups from infiltrating their ranks. We are requesting those who will be participating in this activity to act within the bounds of the law," he said. *Reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora, Juliet Labog-Javellana, and Alcuin Papa*

For 1st time, GMA clearly leads Poe

From page A1

political bosses in the provinces to use their influence and money to herd people into voting for a particular candidate.

Better chances for Poe than Ping

But the polling outfit, in a statement, also said her advantage was still statistically slim, given the survey's three percent margin of error.

"There is no runaway winner at this stage ... There is still a lot of uncertainty," said Ismael Pili, head of equities research of investment house J.P. Morgan.

A last-minute decision by Ms Macapagal's opponents to give way to the strongest candidate among them and unify is also a potentially pivotal factor, analysts said.

But such acts of self-sacrifice appear almost nil at this fairly late stage of the game, said an official of a foreign brokerage house, who asked not to be identified.

"Politics is always egos," the official said.

SWS said a unified opposition "would be more capable of winning the presidential election if it is Panfilo Lacson rather than Fernando Poe Jr. who withdraws from the race."

If Lacson withdrew, about 4.8 percent of his voters would switch over to Poe while 2.1 percent would swing over to the President, it said.

"This would give FPJ 2.7 percent more than GMA, cutting down his survey deficit of 4.5 points to only 1.8 points, which would already be a statistical tie," SWS added.

It said that a Poe withdrawal would not boost Lacson's chances of winning as the former national police chief would remain still 20.6 percent behind Ms Macapagal.

Roco's departure helped GMA

Mangahas and most of the analysts reached by the INQUIRER agreed the abrupt departure from the political scene of Alyansa ng Pag-Asa's Raul Roco helped boost Ms Macapagal's ratings.

Philippine stocks leaped to a three-year closing high yesterday when results of the SWS survey came out. *(Story on Page A1)*

"Foreign investors and local ones are becoming optimistic with what appears to be the emerging trend that probably 'Da King' will have a hard time at the polls," said Westlink Global Equities analyst James Lago, referrring to Poe.

With elections almost around the corner, Dr. Tereso Tullao Jr., an economics professor at De La Salle University, doubted the fragmented opposition still had time to put up an effective common front against her.

"I don't think that within two weeks, they can formulate a reasonable and acceptable economic and social program," Tullao said.

"She (Ms Macapagal) is leading and this can convince the undecided and those politicians who are still thinking twice and want to support a winner, to support GMA," he said.

Big wins in 2 regions erase lead

Still, the opposition has a chance to quell the Macapagal fire.

"It's still a touch and go thing," said Pear's Gatmaitan.

He said Poe had a genuine chance of victory if he could win big in Luzon and in Metro Manila, the latter a traditional opposition stronghold.

Big wins in those two regions would wipe out any advantage Ms Macapagal would have in the Visayas and even, say, in Mindanao, where the Poe camp claims strong support.

"Metro Manila plus Luzon can overwhelm any Visayas and Mindanao vote unless it's overwhelming in those two areas (for GMA)," he said.

'Control votes'

This is where the factor of the so-called "control votes" of political clans could play a decisive role, he said.

"The determining factor will be where (they) go," Gatmaitan said.

"These are the Marcoses in the north, the Ortegas, and the remnants of the Dimaporo family in the south," he said. "About 30 political clans all over the country are going to determine how the election will go."

Although they can be beholden to whoever sits in Malacañang, these long enduring political clans have proved themselves to be politically astute, too.

Balancing act

Their judgments during presidential elections would depend not only on their own short term interests, but on what their constituents also want. After all, the survival of their political dynasties ultimately depend on support from their own backyards.

"It depends on how the Palace treats them, of course, but it also depends on the sentiments of the people below," Gatmaitan said.

"If, for example, Gloria is strong in the Visayas or FPJ is strong in Luzon, they (the clans) cannot ignore that.

They will have to balance that."

No Bandwagon effect

"The political clans are smart," Gatmaitan added. "These clans are well off. *Maski utang yan, pwede.* For example, if they decide to favor a political candidate, *sila ang gagastos. Ang singil naman doble-doble*...The decisive factor will come from these families."

Gatmaitan doubted that the latest survey, by itself, would be enough to create a bandwagon effect that would drive hordes of still undecided voters to go to the President's side.

"The bandwagon will be determined by propaganda, not by surveys," he said. "How are you going to project (survey results) is what matters."

JP Morgan's said the big number of undecided voters "could be a potentially large swing factor."

Uncertainty persists

"There's still uncertainty because if you have a close two-way race as we saw in Taiwan, accusations of fraud and cheating, supporters could bring their arguments to the streets," he said.

Asked if surveys late in a campaign showing one candidate ahead of another could trigger a bandwagon effect, Pili said: "These polls could create self-fulfilling prophecies."

Davide to investors: No need to fear high court

From page A1

where it had no expertise.

Investors in the Philippines should not fear its judiciary, Davide said in a speech he gave before businessmen attending a seminar on the "Enforcement of Corporate Governance in Apec Economies" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

A copy of the Chief Justice's speech was made available to court reporters.

Davide said the recent decisions—among them the voiding of the Piatco consortium's contract for the Naia's Terminal 3—were made by the high court in order to uphold the law and ensure a level playing field in business.

"Indeed, corporations doing business in the Philippines should not fear judicial oversight of its actions because first, it is not an arbitrary power but one that is circumscribed by the constitutional requirement of a justifiable controversy; and second, the same is a necessity in creating a sound business climate founded on the rule of law," Davide said.

But he defended the high court's resolute efforts to "instill corporate discipline and adherence to the rule of law in its deliberations concerning cases with an economic or business dimension."

"The Supreme Court is sensitive to the need for good governance as a prerequisite to lasting economic growth. For this reason, it will continue to uphold the rule of law and the cause of predictable and stable jurisprudence in our country," said Davide, quoting another Supreme Court justice.

Dialogues with business

But he acknowledged that the high court was aware that investor confidence may have been "stirred, if not shaken" by some of its decisions.

DAVIDE

Davide said the tribunal was trying out a "more direct, hands-on approach" by reaching out to the business community through "dialogues" with chambers of commerce and industry groups.

He said the interactive nature of the dialogues made for a better understanding and comprehension of the rulings of the court affecting business decisions.

He pronounced the results encouraging. He said business people appear to have a better appreciation now of the court's efforts at "leveling the playing field" for investors, both local and foreign.

They also appear to appreciate the need for "caution against engaging in ruinous competitive short-cuts and questionable transactions that, inevitably, will result in the legal vulnerability of their investments," he said.

Disclosure policy

Davide said the high court is also studying a proposed "disclosure policy" and judiciary-media relations manual to enhance transparency in the courts.

"When these policies are finally adopted and carried out, criticisms against the court's so-called usurpation of the decision-making powers of the executive and legislative departments in purely economic areas are expected to be muted," he said.

Davide said the court decisions setting aside the contracts for the PEA-Amari, Piatco and the Commission on Elections' poll automation deals have "brought undeserved opprobrium on the court's head."

Safeguard for economic limits

"The Court's efforts to safeguard the economic parameters of what can and cannot be lawfully made subject of commercial wheeling and dealing have been interpreted by its detractors as unwarranted interference in purely economic areas over which the judiciary is perceived to have little or no expertise and, therefore, should rein in its alleged penchant for unjustified intrusion," Davide said.

He justified the court's action, saying the contracts involved were "not run-of-the-mill cases" but billion-peso contracts that the court set aside because of fundamental flaws.

"A common thread that runs across the woof and warp of the controversial contracts is the almost cavalier regard for sacrosanct constitutional limitations and legislative or executive caveats and restrictions," Davide said.

RP stocks soar to 3-yr high due to Wall Street gains, SWS poll

From page A1

telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"Investors are upbeat about first quarter earnings given that a number of companies are declaring cash and stock dividends," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp.

"Investors also took their cue from Wall Street, PLDT and news that (President Gloria) Arroyo has widened her lead in the presidential race," he said.

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Mayoral bet campaign runs on sacks of camote, corn, etc.

From page A1

His wife may not be optimistic—they argued until she agreed he could spend their P30,000 savings—but Catarata is a man not easily discouraged.

He believes that "the people's mandate and support"—plus a few sacks of *camote*, bananas, rice and corn—are enough to get him elected.

"You don't need hundreds of thousands of pesos to win. If you sincerely want to serve people and you have integrity, the support will come," he said.

The volunteers came and campaigned every day for Catarata. Despite the shortage of funds, food is not a problem.

Catarata's campaign headquarters here has received sacks of camote, bananas, rice, corn and other food stuffs donated by people who believe in getting him elected mayor.

Like a marketing list

He jokes about the Commission of Elections mistaking his list of campaign expenditures for a marketing list: "Cost of feeding volunteers: one sack camote, 10 kilos bananas, one sack of rice ..."

It doesn't cost him a thing to campaign around the barangays. Supporters lend him their motorcycles and multicabs. Some even drop off liters of fuel for his dilapidated pick-up truck.

Catarata is a licensed civil engineer who chose to be a farmer. He never dreamed of going into politics.

"I'm a simple man with simple dreams. I do things one at a time. If people want me to lead, I'm here. If I lose, it's not a problem. I will continue to serve in many other ways," he said.

Parents, too

His father, Absalon Catarata, was mayor of Valencia. Unfortunately, he was assassinated on April 21, 1988, 20 days after he was elected into office.

His mother, also ran and won as vice-mayor of Valencia, after his father's death.

Catarata said his parents won because they had integrity. "They didn't have money, but they got more votes than their rivals because of their untainted reputation," he said.

Although he is the official candidate of the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino, Catarata said he and his slate have been campaigning on their own.

"We want to make a point: It's the people who elect the officials, not the political party," he said.

All volunteers

Catarata said that if other leaders followed his example, they wouldn't have to borrow money for their campaigns. They wouldn't have to get involved in political anomalies to pay back their debts.

He said everyone in the campaign is a volunteer—from his secretariat staff to those putting-up campaign posters, from his security escorts to the pollwatchers on May 10.

"They do not receive a single centavo. The spirit of volunteerism is overwhelming. If I win, I will make changes that Valencia needs," he told the INQUIRER.

"I have committed myself to serve the people. I just need to be careful. Aside from leading this city, I also have two children and I want them to see me grow old," he said.

Central Luzon: Aquino-Cojuangco most durable, unique

From page A1

GILBERT TEODORO
for congressman

JESLI LAPUS
for congressman

BUTZ AQUINO
for congressman

HERMIE AQUINO
for vice president

NOYNOY AQUINO
for congressman

and third-generation descendants of founding patriarchs. Here the death of a political patriarch did not mean the end or decline of the family's political dominance.

The combined Aquino-Cojuangco clan of Tarlac is one of the few provincial political families to have projected its power on the national stage to great effect. It has produced one president, three senators, several congressmen and a martyr and national hero.

The Joson clan of Nueva Ecija, which has ruled the province for more than 40 years, is fielding seven family members for various provincial and national posts.

Zambales remains the political playground of the Gordons of Olongapo City and the Magsaysays, heirs to the political legacy of President Ramon Magsaysay.

Nueva Ecija

For 44 years, the people of Nueva Ecija have voted only one name for governor, Joson.

Members of the Joson clan have dominated Nueva Ecija politics since 1960 when the patriarch, Eduardo Joson, to this day referred to as "Tatang," was elected governor and ruled from the capitol for 28 years.

At least seven clan members, led by reelectionist Gov. Tomas Joson III, Eduardo Joson's eldest son, are running for various posts in May.

Tomas III is opposed by former Rep. Julita Lorenzo-Villareal who is being supported by several ruling party officials in a bid to break the Joson family's hold on the province.

His brother, Mariano Cristino, is Tomas III's running mate as the incumbent vice governor, Eduardo Joson IV, wants to leave politics to concentrate on farming and on running his businesses.

Tomas III has fielded his eldest son, 28-year-old Edward Thomas, for board member. Edward Thomas ran and lost in the congressional race for the third district in 2001.

The governor's sister-in-law, first district Rep. Josefina Manuel-Joson, wife of Mariano Cristino, is running for reelection and their son, Eduardo Basilio, is running unopposed for mayor of Quezon town.

The clan is taking its first stab at national politics in this year's elections. Tomas III's brother, Eduardo Nonato, who served for one term as governor and was administrator of the National Food Authority in the Estrada administration, is running for senator under the Alyansa ng Pag-asa coalition of Raul Roco.

Eduardo Nonato's son-in-law, Guimba Mayor Jose Lucius Pocholo Dizon, is seeking reelection.

The Joson patriarch launched the family political dynasty from Quezon town when he dropped out of law school to run for mayor in 1947, a post to which he was reelected several times.

The elder Joson's popularity derives from his war exploits. He was one of the Filipino guerrilla captains who participated in the daring rescue of 512 American prisoners of war in Camp Pangatian in Cabanatuan City during World War II.

His "womb-to-tomb" style of governance went over big with the poor who received free medicine, coffins, hospitalization and scholarships.

After the 1986 People Power Revolution, Joson was replaced by an OIC governor.

He formed the Bagong Lakas ng Nueva Ecija (Balane) party and successfully ran for governor in 1988.

That year, Joson fielded his eldest son Tomas III for board member; his second son Eduardo Nonato for congressman in the first district; his third son Mariano Cristino for mayor of Quezon; and his fifth son Eduardo II for vice mayor of Cabanatuan City. All of them won handily.

In 1990, Joson died and Tomas III took over as governor.

The Josons have had to pay price for political glory.

On Nov. 30, 1990, Eduardo II died hours after he was ambushed by armed men while returning from a visit to Quezon town.

In 1995, Tomas III, then running for reelection as governor, and Mariano Cristino, a reelectionist candidate for mayor of Quezon, were detained as suspects in the murder of former Cabanatuan Mayor Honorato Perez Sr. who was Tomas III's opponent in that year's election.

The Joson brothers were detained at the Camp Crame custodial center for three and a half years before being released on bail. The brothers and nine other suspects were eventually acquitted.

Zambales

Zambales politics continues to be dominated by two old rival families, the Gordons and the Magsaysays.

Outgoing Olongapo City Mayor Katherine "Kate" Gordon and her brother-in-law, 1st district Rep. James Gordon Jr., are swapping positions. Kate will attempt to regain the congressional post that she used to hold while James Jr. will run for Olongapo mayor.

Former Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Kate's husband and James' brother, is running for senator under the administration coalition.

James Jr.'s wife, Anna Marie, is running for a seat in the Zambales provincial board.

The Gordon family's hold on Olongapo politics started when the patriarch, James Leonard Gordon Sr., was elected as the first mayor of Olongapo after the city was turned over to Philippine government control by the commander of the US Subic Naval Base. James Sr. was assassinated in the 1960s and his wife, Amelia Juico Gordon, took over the reins of the city government.

Kate's bid is being opposed by Maria Milagros "Mitos" Magsaysay, the daughter-in-law of reelectionist Gov. Vicente Magsaysay, in a congressional district that the Gordons have held unchallenged for three decades.

Relatives of the Magsaysay clan in Zambales who are running for various local posts include the governor's cousins, Castillejos Mayor Enrique Magsaysay, who is seeking reelection, and former Rep. Antonio Magsaysay Diaz, who is trying to reclaim his old post in the second district.

The Magsaysays' control of Zambales politics dates back to the 1950s when patriarch Ramon Magsaysay rose to become President of the Republic.

Younger brother Gènaro was elected senator in 1959 and served until 1972. The President's son, Ramon Jr., was congressman from 1965 to 1969 and is a serving senator.

Tarlac

The Aquino-Cojuangco clan is unique because of individual members who played important roles in the nation's life. In 1983, former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino was assassinated as he returned from exile. His killing ignited the anti-dictatorship movement that led to the first people power revolution of 1986 that brought down the dictator Ferdinand Marcos and installed his widow, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, as President.

The clan is one of the most resilient political families in the country, having survived loss of political and economic power, martial law, assassination and inter-family conflict.

It has been monopolizing congressional seats in Tarlac for generations. Ninoy was himself governor and congressman before being elected senator.

All three districts of the province are held by clan members who are all running in May.

Rep. Gilberto Teodoro Jr., who is now on his third and last term as congressman of the first district, is running unopposed. Teodoro is the son of former Mercedes Teodoro, a sister of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. and an assemblywoman in the Marcos-era Batasang Pambansa.

In the second district, Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, a second cousin of Teodoro's, is also on his third and last term. His post is being contested by five other candidates.

Rep. Jesli Aquino Lapus is running unopposed in his final bid for representative of the third district.

A former third district representative, Herminio Aquino, the uncle of Ninoy, is running for vice president under Raul Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-asa.

Ninoy's sister, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, is a senator and brother Agapito "Butz" Aquino is a congressman of Makati.

Pampanga

Political dynasties in Pampanga are far more numerous now than they were two decades ago.

The Macapagal-Arroyo family leads the dynastic rolls in the province. As President Macapagal-Arroyo, the daughter of the late President Diosdado Macapagal, seeks a full term, her eldest son, Vice Gov. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, is running for congressman in the province's second district.

Mikey, who lists his occupation as actor, protests the dynasty tag, saying he and his mother are "only living out [his] grandfather's legacy of service."

Arthur Macapagal and former Vice Gov. Cielo Macapagal-Salgado, the late President's children by his first wife Purita de la Rosa, are sitting out the elections this year.

The Lapid family's rise to power is an oddity in Pampanga politics long dominated by the landed elite.

Gov. Manuel Lapid, who parlayed his movie-star popularity into the governorship, is running for senator in the administration coalition. His eldest son, board member Mark Lapid, is running for the governor's seat that he is vacating.

Lapid's brother, Porac Vice Mayor Rey Lapid, is running for representative of the second district against Mikey.

Children and grandchildren of retired or deceased clan patriarchs figure prominently in this year's elections.

Angeles City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin, the son of the late Gov. Rafael Lazatin, is running for reelection while his daughter, Janet, is running for representative.

Rep. Francis Nepomuceno, the son of former Angeles City Mayor Francisco Nepomuceno and the late Gov. Juanita Nepomuceno, is seeking a third and final term. His brother Bingbong is a mayoral candidate.

With these personalities in the race, Angeleños are seeing a return of the old Lazatin-Nepomuceno rivalry that characterized the politics of the city in the 1950s.

The death of Rep. Emigdio Bondoc six years ago has not meant the eclipse of his family from the political scene. His children, Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc and Dr. Anna York, are running for governor and representative, respectively.

The Guiaos ventured into politics after the 1986 People Power Revolution through the late governor and loyal Lakas party man Bren Guiao.

The main torchbearer is his son board member Roseller "Yeng" Guiao who is taking another shot at the vice gubernatorial post.

The late governor's brother, Pastor Guiao, is seeking reelection as Magalang town mayor.

There are also mother-and-son tandems in the local races.

Former Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo is running for mayor of the City of San Fernando against Rep. Oscar Rodriguez. Her son, former Health Undersecretary Eric Domingo, is running for representative in the third district.

Board member Lilia Pineda and her son Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda are both running for re-election. Lilia's husband, Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, is the suspected "jueteng" lord of the province and the family's entrance into politics in the 1990s coincided with the heyday of illegal gambling in Pampanga.

Bulacan

Wives and children of politicians who end their terms this year are running for various positions to ensure their families' continued hold on Bulacan politics.

Caridad Sevilla, the wife of San Miguel Mayor Santiago Sevilla; Dr. Matilde Legaspi, the wife of Norzagaray Mayor Feliciano Legaspi; Sabelita Roquero, the wife of San Jose del Monte Mayor Eduardo Roquero; and Teresita Vistan, wife of the late former Plaridel Mayor Jaime Vistan, are all running for the posts their husbands are vacating or have held before.

Ramon Pagdanganan Jr., the son of Calumpit Mayor Ramon Pagdanganan Sr., and Bernadette Duran, the daughter of Marilao Mayor Leoncio Duran, are aspiring to replace their fathers.

Raymond Pagdanganan, Mayor Pagdanganan's nephew and a son of former Bulacan governor and Tourism Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, is running for Bulacan vice governor.

Former Bulacan Rep. Ricardo Silverio, the husband of reelectionist Rep. Lorna Silverio, is running for mayor of San Rafael.

Reelectionist Rep. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado's wife, Victoria Reyes-Alvarado, is running for vice mayor in Hagonoy town.

Three children of the late Foreign Secretary Blas Ople are also running. Hagonoy Mayor Felix Ople is running for reelection while his brother, former board member Raul Ople, is running for representative against Sy-Alvarado.

Their sister, Dalisay Ople-San Jose, who was chief of staff of her father, is running for councilor in Hagonoy.

Bocaue Mayor Eduardo Villanueva Jr. is running for reelection. His father, evangelist Eduardo "Bro. Eddie" Villanueva, is running for president under the Bangon Pilipinas party.

Jojo Villanueva, Mayor Villanueva's brother, is the incumbent representative of the party-list group Cibac or Citizens' Board Against Corruption.

In Malolos City, Councilor Christian Natividad, son of the late Bulacan Rep. Teodulo Natividad, is running for mayor.

Bataan

The fight between longtime political rivals, Bataan Gov. Leonardo Roman and Rep. Enrique Garcia, has widened with Garcia and his two sons running against Roman and his allies.

Roman, who is on his last term after serving as governor for the past 16 years, and Balanga City Mayor Albert Garcia, the 37-year-old son of Representative Garcia, are aiming for the same congressional post.

Representative Garcia is running for governor against Vice Gov. Rogelio Roque, a longtime ally of Roman.

Garcia's other son, Joey Garcia, is running for mayor against board member Melanio Banzon, a former mayor of Balanga and a close ally and relative of Roman.

Abra

In Abra, most of the candidates who are running in these elections are members of political families active for past several decades.

Gov. Vicente Valera, Abra's longest sitting governor and the son of former Gov. Jose Valera, is running for reelection. Bangued Mayor Ma. Zita Claustro-Valera, the governor's wife, is also running for reelection.

There are at least four other Valeras running for office but provincial election officer Eugene Ramos said they do not belong to the same family as the governor's.

"There are approximately five different lineages of the Valera family here. They may be related to one another but only to a certain degree," Ramos said.

Running against Mayor Valera is Dominic Valera, husband of incumbent Bangued Vice Mayor Mila Valera.

In Lagayan town, Mayor Cecilia Luna is running for reelection. Luna's mother, Anita Seares, was a former mayor of the town.

Luna's daughter-in-law, Vice Mayor Joy Luna, is also running for reelection.

Mayor Luna's husband, Roger, is running for governor against Valera while their son, Ryan, is the barangay captain of Dangdangla in Bangued.

The Bernoses of La Paz will have family members running against each other on May 10.

Mayor Marc Ysrael Bernos, son of former La Paz Mayor Andres Bernos, is running for reelection against his aunt Florencia Bernos.

His brother, Joseph, is running for vice mayor.

In Penarrubia town, Mayor Lovelyn Domes-ag is running for reelection against her estranged husband Antonio Domes-ag.

Socorro Guzman, sister of Governor Valera and wife of Dolores Mayor Albert Guzman, is running for vice mayor of Dolores.

In Daguioman town, Mayor Sally Co Kue is running for reelection, and is being opposed by her husband Manuel Co Kue and another candidate, Rudy Garcia.

Apayao

The Bulut family's political dominance of Apayao is not expected to be dented for the next three years as its candidates will be facing candidates they handily beat in the last elections.

Rep. Elias Bulut Jr. will again face singer-actress Bambina Perez while his father, Gov. Elias Bulut Sr., is being challenged by Robert Angco and Ambaro Sagle.

In the family's hometown of Calanasan where Bulut Sr. was mayor for 20 years, and his son Elias Jr. from 1998 to 2001, Bulut Sr.'s daughter, Dr. Eleanor Bulut-Bagtang, is running for a second term against Agustin Sipsip, who is a relative of Bulut Jr.'s wife.

The elder Bulut is considered the father of Apayao because he authored the bill that separated Apayao from Kalinga in 1995. *Reports from Anselmo Roque, Tonette Orejas, Carmela Reyes, Greg Refraccion, Russell Arador, Allan Macatuno, Cesar Villa and Ronald Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Marikina KNP ready to leave FPJ

By Luige del Puerto

MONEY problems are plaguing the camp of actor Fernando Poe Jr. in Marikina City where restive members of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) are threatening to leave the party for the group of either Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson or Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

According to Sonny Parsons, KNP's candidate for mayor in the city, many of their members were complaining of the lack of financial support from the party.

"They always say, next week, next week. But until now, we have not received anything," said Parsons, referring to promises of aid by KNP leaders.

He said that so far, he had been able to convince his teammates to stay with Poe's camp.

"*Pero hirap na hirap na kami* (But we are really suffering a lot)," he said.

Parsons revealed that the KNP members in Marikina were thinking of joining Villanueva's team or that of Lacson.

"*Maawa naman sila sa amin dito sa* Marikina (They should pity us)," Parsons said.

This admission helps explain why Parsons, congressional candidate Romeo "Ome" Candazo, and other opposition candidates barely have posters and streamers in the city.

Parsons is challenging Mayor Marides Lourdes Fernando.

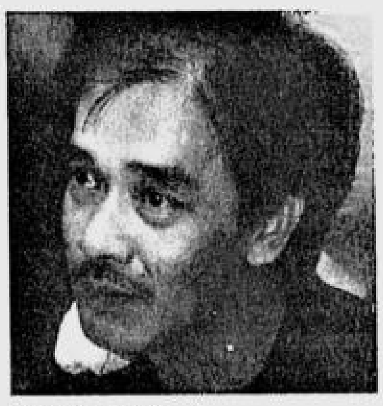
Parsons said he and his teammates have been digging deep into their own pockets to continue their campaign.

"That is why I use my horse, it does not need fuel," he joked.

Parsons has been going around the city on the back of a horse, as part of his strategy.

Confirming Parson's revelations, Candazo said many of their candidates for councilor were planning to abandon Poe if they do not get support soon.

The congressional candidate complained that they were even paying for the sorties of their senatorial candidates.



ABANDONED. Parsons

Namfrel official not on vote list

By Margaux Ortiz

A RANKING official of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) complained yesterday of falling victim to an erroneous certified voters list (CVL).

Namfrel Secretary General Guillermo Luz yesterday said he discovered that his name was missing from the list when he did a random check of the National Capital Region CVL.

"I normally vote in San Juan and now my name could not be found in the list," Luz said in a press conference.

Also, Luz said that of the 41 voters' names he cross-checked, only 11 bore correct information. The rest had wrong birthdates, wrong addresses, and wrong precinct assignments, he added.

Erroneous database

"And this is in Metro Manila alone, what more in the provinces?" Luz stressed, adding that a problem in the Commission on Elections database caused the erroneous entries.

The Namfrel secretary general said all voters should check their names in the CVLs or risk disenfranchisement.

Luz said voters could check their names at their precincts and voting centers. Or, he added, voters can verify with their local election officer or registrar.

Namfrel Chair Jose Concepcion Jr., on the other hand, said they have yet to receive the correct, full and complete CVLs.

FOR REGISTRATION

CALOOCAN City mayoral candidate Edgar Erice looks into the burned Suzuki multicab which his office had donated to the city's Barangay 97.

JOAN BONDOC

Caloocan campaign heats up with attacks

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

CALOOCAN City mayoral candidate Edgar Erice yesterday accused the camp of Mayor Rey Malonzo of harassing his supporters.

According to Erice, some of his supporters were stopped from putting up posters along 4th Avenue and the tires of their service vehicle were punctured at about 1 a.m. yesterday.

Van burned

The unidentified attackers even reportedly took the vehicle's amplifier.

About 30 minutes later, four men reportedly torched the Suzuki multicab that Erice had donated to Barangay 97 four months ago.

The multicab was then parked along Ilang-Ilang Street, near the barangay outpost.

Erice said barangay chair Rolando Aquino was one of his allies.

But Malonzo said Erice could just be inventing stories to get media mileage.

Erice is running for mayor against Malonzo's wife Gigi, former Mayor Macario Asistio Jr. and Rep. Enrico Echiverri.

File charges

The mayor said Erice should file charges and not just report his allegations to the media.

Erice said they were preparing robbery charges against Malonzo's men who attacked his supporters in 4th Avenue.

However, Erice remains clueless on the identities of the four armed men who burned the multicab.

Earlier, Malonzo accused Erice's men of harassing his supporters who were pasting posters also in 4th Avenue.

Arrest of terror suspects embarrass policemen

By Christian V. Esguerra

RED-FACED police officers were forced to release eight persons, including a female medical student after they made a mistake in arresting them at the Manila Port Area Thursday afternoon.

"It was a case of mistaken identity," said Minah Datuharon, 30, a student of Fatima Medical School in Valenzuela and the lone female in the group "invited for questioning" at the Philippine Coast Guard office at around 4:30 p.m.

A report by the PNP Maritime Group, however said three of those arrested were Abu Sayyaf suspects who bolted the Basilan provincial jail last April 10.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, PNP spokesperson, disowned the report but admitted that authorities got the wrong suspects.

"There was no indication that they were Abu Sayyaf members. They were just ordinary passengers," he said.

Lopez says Atienza refusal to debate cowardice

By Tarra Quismundo

ONE THINKS it would be useless. For the other, such is an act of cowardice.

Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. did not give in to the challenge of his political rival to a debate, as he believed such was unnecessary.

"I don't think there's a need for that. It would just be a chance for him to throw accusations," said Atienza, seeking reelection this year under the Liberal Party.

The incumbent's foremost rival, former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez, challenged Atienza to a debate which he said could help Manilans weigh their options before casting their votes on May 10.

"For me, that's being a coward. Why doesn't he want to have a debate with me so we can show the public what we can do for them?" said Lopez, who held the city's top post as a presidential appointee from 1986 to 1992.

Lopez, now with Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, added that he had "nothing to hide."

But Atienza would not yield to Lopez's call, and said that the voters know enough to choose based on their track records.

"I believe in politics of performance. I am confident that the people will vote based on what they see we have done. They are tired of promises," said Atienza.

The mayor has always refused to engage Lopez in any public meeting as, he said, it would only give the former mayor the attention he is looking for.

Lopez is trying to make a come back after being out of the political scene for more than a decade.

Since the start of the campaign period on March 25, Lopez has been coming out with his exposés on Atienza, among which were the mayor's alleged private armies and fiscal mismanagement at City Hall.

All of these accusations Atienza denied, and said that Lopez should just show a concrete platform of governance instead of leading an attack-based campaign.

Lopez had also hit Atienza on his Buhayin ang Maynila Program.

METROBRIEFS

Explosive killed Dy

A POWERFUL explosive called RDX or cyclonite caused the explosion inside a Mitsubishi Pajero in Valenzuela City the other day that killed oil trader Peter Dy, 58, and wounded his driver Janvil Fajardo, 25, and passerby Mary Jane Peron, 37. City police chief Jose Marcelo said RDX powder residue boosted their theory of a "foul play" in the explosion. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Alleged serial killers

MARTE Mandag, 31, and Rolando Ilustre, 32, were nabbed by operatives of the Western Police District's Station 7 for allegedly being responsible for several killings in Manila. The two men were arrested right after stabbing two teenagers last week, one of whom died. In a report, the WPD said both Mandag and Ilustre are also suspects in three other killings in Tondo. *Leila Salaverria*

2 robbers lynched

TWO ALLEGED robbers proved no match for a mob that rushed to the aid of taxi driver Jeselton Romero, 38, who shouted for help after being held up in Manila yesterday. The suspects have yet to be identified.
Leila Salaverria and Kate Pedroso

Residences Makati

AYALA Land, Inc. (ALI) has declared an open house today and tomorrow, Sunday, for The Residences model units at the 3rd level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center in Makati City. The open house is from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. ALI offers 3 bedroom units of the 48-story Laguna Tower, the first of the three towers of The Residences. For inquiries, call 848-5000; or e-mail ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph or log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph.

END OF THE LINE
Policemen load the body of an unidentified man who shot it out with lawmen after allegedly trying to rob a store along Sto. Cristo Street in Divisoria, Manila.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

12-year-old boy dies in Makati blaze

By Margaux Ortiz

A 12-YEAR-OLD boy was killed in a fire which razed a residential compound in Makati City early yesterday morning.

Moises Molina, of 7126 M. Ocampo St., Pio del Pilar, was burned beyond recognition at the second floor of their house, according to Supt. Arsenio Tabajonda, Makati fire chief.

Tabajonda said the boy's father Manuel, who was sleeping at the first floor of the house when the fire began at 2:27 a.m., survived the incident.

According to initial investigation, Manuel's nephew Luisito went out of the house around that time.

The fire chief added that Luisito may have left a candle burning because the Molinas' electricity had been cut off more than five years ago.

The fire, which razed 10 houses and destroyed P1 million worth of property, was put out at 3:45 a.m.

In Manila, arson investigators are checking whether a gas leak was behind the hour-long fire that hit a six-door apartment building in Quiapo, Manila.

The fire started at 5:00 a.m. inside the apartment unit along San Sebastian Street rented by Erlinda Salanguit. The blaze was put out at 6:04 a.m.

Around P1 million worth of property was also damaged in the incident.

According to SF01 Emmanuel Gaspar, the fire began in Salanguit's kitchen and quickly spread. At that time, Salanguit was out of the house and only her two grandchildren were at home. The two grandchildren were able to leave the burning house.

Two neighboring houses were also partially damaged in the fire. Fortunately, no one was reported hurt or injured.

Gaspar said arson investigators suspect the fire was caused by gas leak since it started in the kitchen. *With Leila Salaverria and Neil Lim*

The reason for the archbishop's fury

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

WHY is Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz going after President Macapagal-Arroyo hammer and thongs?

Because, according to people close to the President, the prelate couldn't forgive her for sending only a representative to an anti-jueteng forum to which Ms Macapagal was invited.

The anti-jueteng forum was organized by Cruz himself. He wanted the President to attend it.

But the President was too busy at the time and sent Local Government Secretary Joey Lina to attend in her behalf.

What does Cruz's frothing in the mouth for the President's no-show at his forum mean? That the prelate probably wanted to put the government on notice that he is as powerful as retired Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

The archbishop should be reminded about the Catholic Church's teaching that people with excessive pride commit sin.

* * *

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., any administration's cash cow for its civic and charity projects, is the most vulnerable target of anti-gambling advocates.

Why? Because one can easily find fault with the gambling agency in a country where hypocrites abound.

For where in the world can you find a religious organization hitting hard at an agency that funnels money to it to support its charitable institution?

And when one of the leaders of this church was confronted about criticizing Pagcor when it was supporting its charity projects, what did the church leader say? That it was okay to accept money from an "evil source" as long as the recipient would use the money for good.

If that's not hypocrisy I don't know what is.

* * *

Before Catholic Church leaders denounce the "evil" of gambling, why don't they first clean up their backyards?

Many Catholic parishes sponsor bingo socials and lottery purportedly to raise funds for the church. Aren't bingo and lottery also gambling?

A big gambling lord once told me that among his beneficiaries, aside from local and police officials, are Catholic parishes in areas where jueteng, the illegal numbers game, is played.

He said Catholic priests and nuns who run schools approach him when they undertake projects for their parishes or schools.

If jueteng is evil, then why do priests and nuns go to this jueteng lord for money?

* * *

Archbishop Cruz said Pagcor bought 180 motorcycles, 35 multicabs and 50 Ford Ranger pick-ups allegedly to backstop the President's campaign among the barangays.

But how did Cruz know that those vehicles were already up for distribution among the barangays even before the presidential campaign period?

Admittedly, the timing was off, but why blame the President for the sycophancy of Pagcor officials?

Oftentimes, people at the bottom rung of the bureaucratic ladder make moves that are unacceptable to please their boss, little realizing that when things go wrong the boss gets the blame.

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DAVADILLA wins the 9th stage over Albert Primero (center) and Erick Feliciano. ROMY HOMILLADA

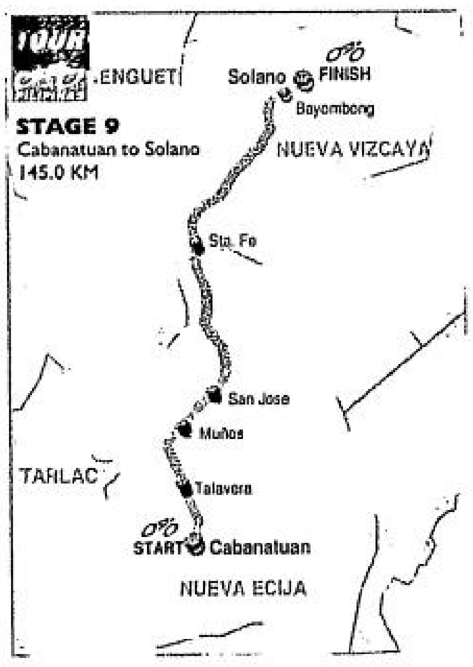
Domingo lead intact, hurdles Dalton climb

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SOLANO, Nueva Vizcaya—On the day everybody expected him to lose the yellow jersey, Enrique Domingo ably faced up to the Dalton Pass challenge and kept his hefty overall lead after the ninth stage of the Air 21 Tour Pilipinas yesterday.

The 35-year-old Domingo surprised even himself when he managed to cling with the main pack going up the 850-meter historic Dalton Pass at the Nueva Ecija-Nueva Vizcaya boundary and preserved his seven-minute, 22-second lead over Rhyan Tanguilig.

Warren Davadilla, the 1998 champion, led the way home for an eight-man lead pack to take lap honors even as a pall of gloom fell on the entourage with the death of a spectator who was electrocuted while watching the Tour from a ledge near a major power line.



"*Sabi nila wala akong ahon, meron pala* (They said I don't have climbing skills, it turned out they're wrong)," said Domingo, who will wear the yellow jersey of leadership for the third straight day today. "*Patingin-tingin lang ako paakyat, ako naman ang pasahero kanina* (I was just observing them going up, this time I just followed the pacesetters)."

Beer na Beer's Joel Calderon retained third place 9:59 off the pace, but rookie teammate Tomas Martinez advanced to fourth just 11:56 away, while Dole skipper Albert Primero moved up to fifth, 12:15 away.

Primero placed second for the day over erstwhile Tour leader Eric Feliciano while Martinez gained mainly through finishing seventh in the lead pack.

Eusebio Quiñones dropped to sixth overall followed by Merculio Ramos, Joseph Millanes, Santy Barnachea and Feliciano, who dislodged two-time champion Renato Dolosa as 10th placer. *(See results on Page A26.)*

Domingo was part of the big main pack that included Tanguilig, Calderon and Quiñones. The peloton finished 56 seconds behind the stage winner, who timed three hours 39 minutes and 32 seconds.

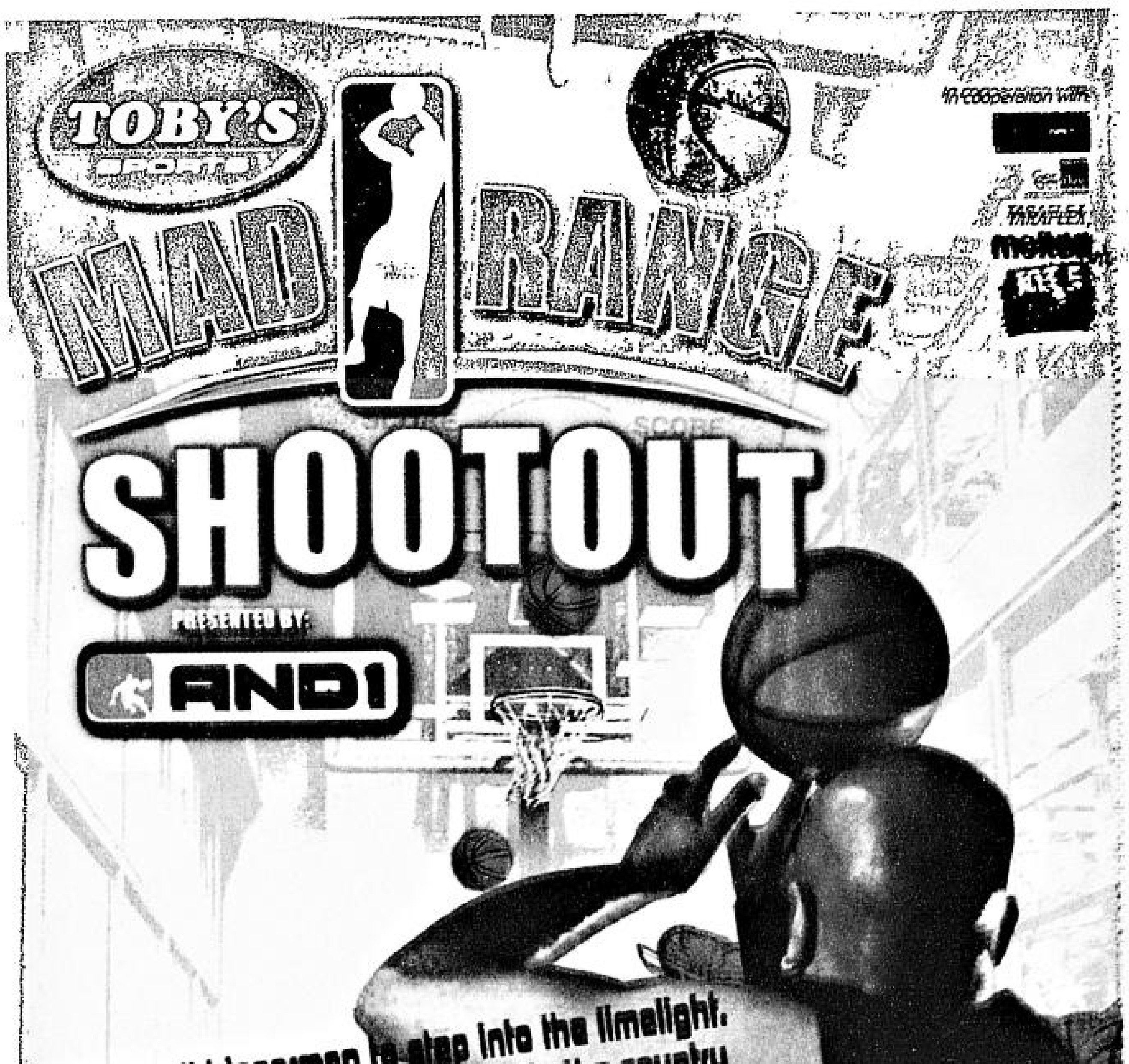
"I wasn't thinking of the climb nor the overall leadership, nothing crossed my mind while riding," said Domingo in Filipino when asked about the pressure of holding on to the yellow jersey.

Domingo, who left Cabanatuan City with the sprint and team championship as his only priorities, said his performance yesterday made him realize that he can take a crack at the individual title after all.

"I just hope my teammates (Postmen) would help me along the way," added Domingo, who had owned the yellow jersey twice before only to lose it to eventual champions in the make-or-break Baguio stages.

In 1996, he was holding a 15-minute lead that eventual champion Victor Espiritu erased in the Baguio-to-Baguio stage. Last year, defending champion Arnel Quirimit took the jersey away from him in that same stage.

The freak accident that caused the fan's death happened in the national highway near this town. Reports said the spectator raised his hands when the cyclists passed and touched a live wire. The incident also caused power outage throughout the town.



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4. You may bring your entry forms to any of the following:
   - 1st leg: April 29 & 30, 10 am to 6 pm. Basement Activity Area, SM North Edsa, Quezon City
   - 2nd leg: May 2, 10 am to 6 pm. Glorietta Activity Area, Ayala Center, Makati
   - 3rd leg: June 12 & 13, 10 am to 6 pm. SM Megamall Bldg. A, Activity Area (tentative)
   - 4th leg: July 30 & 31, 10 am to 6 pm. SM North Edsa, Quezon City

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Overall standings After Stage 9

10. E. Feliciano	(Patrol 117)	16:03 mins.	behind
9. S. Barnachea	(Mail & More)	15:50 mins.	behind
8. J. Milanes	(Postmen)	14:56 mins.	behind
7. M. Ramos	(Samsung)	13:01 mins.	behind
6. E. Quinones	(Purefoods)	12:43 mins.	behind
5. A. Primero	(Dole)	12:15 mins.	behind
4. T. Martinez	(Beer na Beer)	11:56 mins.	behind
3. J. Calderon	(Beer na Beer)	9:58 mins.	behind
2. R. Tanguilig	(PLDT)	7:22 mins	behind
1. E. Domingo	(Postman)	37:12:31	

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Hype getting on nerves of Pacquiao foe

APPEARING more miffed than concerned, reigning WBA-IBF featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez yesterday vowed to surprise pundits when he fights Manny Pacquiao on May 8 at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Marquez, who has practically trained away from the prying cameras of the media, said he is not going to be affected by what the so-called "experts" are saying about his showdown with Pacquiao.

"I don't care what people say. It is very uncomfortable that the people underestimate my work and quality as boxer," revealed Marquez in an interview with the Mexican boxing writer Jesus Lopez.

"I don't want to be talking so much… Many people say that Pacquio is a superman, out of the ordinary. The only thing that I want to say to those people is, be prepared for defeat."

Las Vegas oddsmakers have installed Pacquiao a 7-5 favorite to beat Marquez.

The Mexican had also branded as "unfair" some predictions that he would meet the same fate as former world featherweight great Marco Antonio Barrera, who was taken out by Pacquiao in the 11th round last November.

To beat 'Pacquiao, Marquez said he would have to match the Filipino's weapons. "I will fight his poison with poison to conquer him," he said. "I will have to be equal or stronger, but above all quicker."

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Red Bull takes on Shell; TNT battles FedEx

RED Bull and Talk 'N Text, fancied teams going through contrasting streaks, clash against separate foes today as the second round of the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Conference elimination round heats up.

The Thunder seek a third straight victory and a share of second place when they battle the Shell Turbochargers in the 4:10 p.m. game, even as the Phone Pals try to check a two-game slide in the 6:30 nightcap at the Makati Coliseum.

Talk 'N Text squares off with FedEx, looking to get back in the top four list after two close shaves pulled the Phone Pals to fifth in the standings.

Tournament format calls for the top two teams after the elimination round to advance to the quarterfinals outright. Nos. 3 and 4 will play No. 10 and No. 9, respectively with a twice-to-beat advantage.

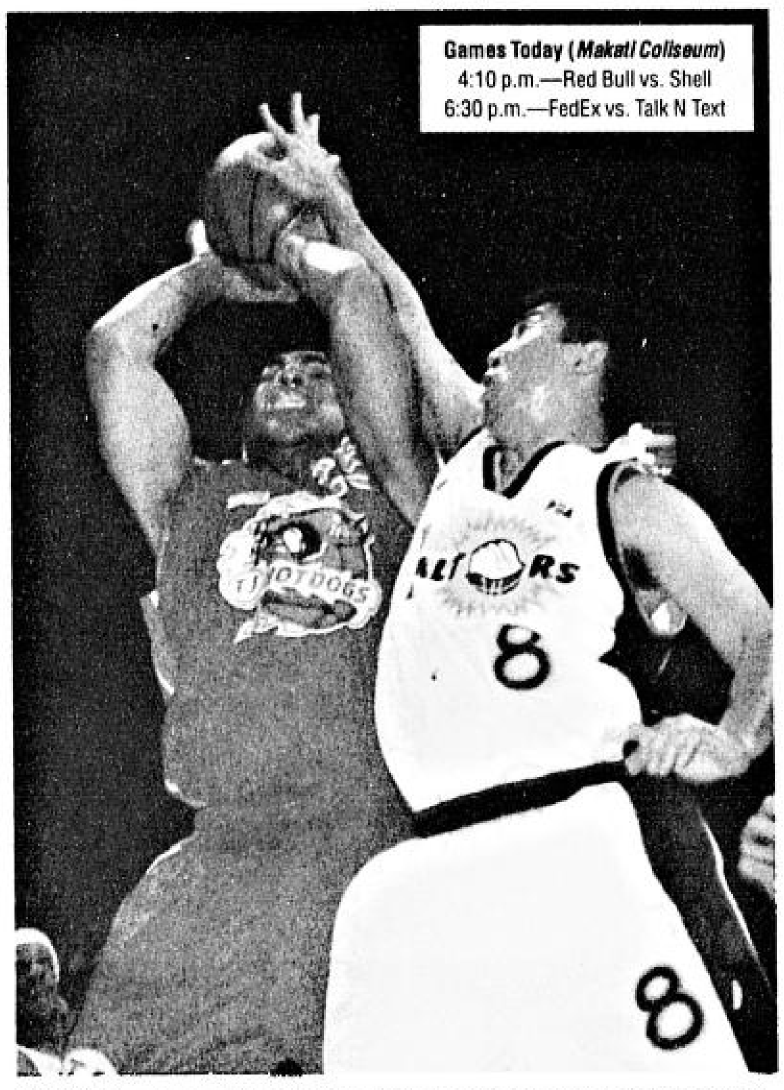
The fifth and sixth teams after the elims then draw Nos. 8 and 7, respectively, in two knockout matches. The winners of these pairings will then join the top two teams in the quarterfinals.

Red Bull is hoping new import Cory Hightower would finally come around, for it needs all hands against the Turbochargers, who have a gem of a reinforcement in Jameel Watkins.

Yeng Guiao is optimistic that he has found the right man for the job, though no one saw a jewel in Hightower Sunday last week, as the Thunder barely made it past the Phone Pals, 106-104 with Hightower contributing only 12 points on 3-of-20 shooting from the field.

Jimwell Torion bailed the Thunder out, as his comeback game produced all the points and the highlights of the player of old which could have caught TNT off guard.

Musong Castillo



Games Today (*Makati Coliseum*)
4:10 p.m.—Red Bull vs. Shell
6:30 p.m.—FedEx vs. Talk N Text

PAOLO Mendoza of Sta. Lucia Realty thwarts Rob Johnson of Purefoods in their recent game. The Realtors won this one. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Top RP bet Mendoza lands 9th in sabre event

By Trina Ibarle

WALLY Mendoza wound up ninth in the men's sabre event as the Philippines continued to flounder in the face of superior opposition in the 2004 Sharp Asian Fencing Championships yesterday at the Philsports Arena.

Mendoza, a gold medalist in the 2001 and 2003 Southeast Asian Games, made it to the round of 16 where he took a 15-11 decision from China's Cai Lin to bow out of contention.

Unheralded Wendylene Mendoza was the country's best finisher in the women's sabre division, placing 23rd in a field of 35. She lost, 15-2, to Chen Yanhong of China in the round of 32.

If it were any consolation, Mendoza improved on his 14th-place finish in last year's Asian tourney.

"We are getting better, but it's not enough for us to win medals yet. We are making progress little by little, and it is part of the process," said Philippine Amateur Fencing Association secretary general Gejo Jimenez.

Filipino epee and foil bets likewise failed to reach the quarterfinals in the first two days of the Asian competition.

Ranked ninth based on the point system of the individual events, the host team is pitted against 10th-ranked Thailand, which RP beat in last year's SEA Games finals for the epee team gold.

Powerhouse China dominated the individual events with five golds, two silver, and two bronze medals. Korea was second overall with a 1-1-2 harvest, while Japan was third with a 0-1-4 haul.

Welcoat seeks No. 6; Knights play Blue Eagles

WELCOAT Paints, fresh off hurdling a severe test, seeks its sixth straight victory against Montaña Pawnshop today even as Toyota Otis-Letran tries to sustain its winning drive in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Inspired by their 78-73 overtime conquest of defending champion Hapee Toothpaste last Wednesday, the Paint Masters are odds-on favorites in their 4 p.m. date with the Jewels.

Toyota Otis-Letran earlier shoots for a third straight triumph against the winless Lee Pipes-Ateneo at 2 p.m.

Both games will be shown live on Studio 23.

STANDINGS	W	L
Welcoat	5	0
Viva Mineral	5	1
Hapee	3	2
Sunkist-UST	3	3
Toyota Otis	2	2
Montaña	1	4
Blu Star	1	4
Lee Pipes	0	4

GAMES TODAY
(*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Lee Pipes vs Toyota Otis
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Welcoat

Although heavily favored, the Paint Masters are not taking it easy. "We have to stay focused. There will be no letup for us until we achieve our goal," said coach Caloy Garcia.

The Jewels, carrying a 1-4 record, will be handled by Ronnie Dojillo after head coach Bong Go resigned last Monday for health reasons.

Montaña reportedly wants Tonichi Yturri to handle the team later on.

The Knights lost their first two games before winning their next two, the last an impressive 70-64 victory over Sunkist-UST.

But the Eagles won't be an easy assignment for sure. Lee Pipes-Ateneo knows its personnel are more or less at par with the Knights. *Trina Ibarle*

Nadera upsets GM

DUBAI—Filipino International Master Barlo Nadera upset Grandmaster Zviad Izoria of Georgia in the fourth round to gain on the leaders in the Dubai Open Chess Championships here.

Nadera tied compatriot IM Nelson Mariano II and GM Shakriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan, who drew their game Thursday, at 3.5 points.

Nadera, Mariano, Mamedrayov and eight others are a half point behind a perfect top seed Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu of Romania.

GM Bong Villamayor dealt GM Ashot Anastasian his second loss to be at 3 points.

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NBN again

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IN a recent news dispatch by NBN, it quoted its chair/president, Mia Concio, as saying: "While NBN is government-owned and [a] controlled corporation, it does not receive any government subsidy for its operations."

With that setup, we can only deduce that NBN is financially solid. For, how can a controlled corporation be granted subsidy if it's an earning entity?

But the truth is, it is not earning, has not been earning, any income the way a government-owned corporation, like the GSIS or PNB, should.

The truth is, NBN has been mired in debts that the network has not been able to pay the fees of its talents for months now. Even most of the basic benefits of employees have remained unpaid, too; a union strike could hit the Network anytime now, I was told.

The truth is, debts amounting to millions have remained unsettled; some are accumulating gargantuan interests. As I said here a while back, NBN owes the PBA millions, not to mention a sizable amount the television station owes to PBL chair Chino Trinidad.

The truth is, the network still owes the International Olympic Committee more than one million dollars for its boo-boo in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and yet, NBN still has the gall to bid to cover the Olympic Games in Athens late this year.

I had called for a national mass action to protest NBN's bid to cover the Olympiad on the ground that we are all co-owners of NBN, it being a government entity. If it is so buried in huge debts, why the need for NBN to bid for the TV coverage of the Games?

The same NBN dispatch also quoted Concio, who had recently become a mother, as saying: "The network relies on its commercial and airtime sales for its operational expenses."

She also said, the "Network has not been remiss in paying the salaries of its employees, although lack of funds has delayed payments of the benefits."

Concio added: "At any rate, the Network has been giving the benefits due to (sic) the employees whenever funds are available. As far as payment of talent fees is concerned, the Network is doing its best to update."

In the same dispatch, Concio said: "As regards the cases filed by Bong Barrameda against the Network, all the cases have been dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence."

The dispatch said "the case filed by Barrameda with the Ombudsman was dismissed on July 23, 2002, while the case lodged before the Regional Trial Court in Quezon City was similarly dismissed on June 12, 2003."

This drew a sharp rebuke from Bong Barrameda, the country's undisputed trivia king. Said Bong:

"I did not file a complaint against NBN with the Office of the Ombudsman. I cannot. The Ombudsman deals only with charges against government officials, and not offices or agencies. The case of graft and corruption was against a couple of individuals who continue to be the subject of administrative complaints from their co-employees. As for the court case, the trial judge dismissed the suit as well as NBN's countersuit; thus, it is now with the Court of Appeals."

Bong has also explained his side on another matter in a letter he addressed to my fellow columnist of the Star, Quinito Henson, a copy of which has been furnished me. Wrote Bong to Quinito:

"Please allow me to correct items that appeared in your column:

"Researcher Bong Barrameda" you wrote.

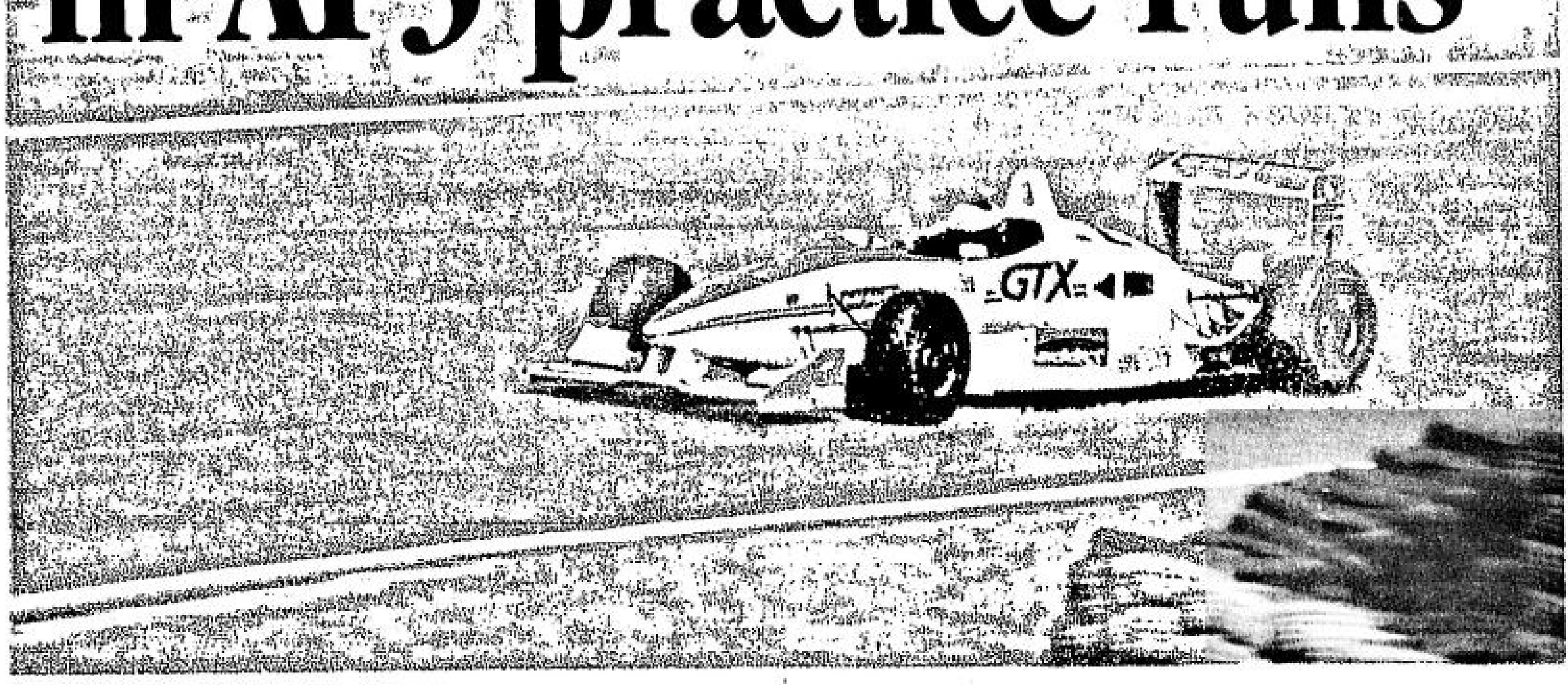
"Since 1985, I have invariably acted as Executive Producer-Head Writer and Chief Planner of all the local and international sports events I covered. These include a slew of Southeast Asian, Asian and Olympic Games which were aired on either NBN, ABS-CBN and IBC.

"If indeed Ms Mia Concio used 'researcher' to describe me, then she has a short memory. In 2001, she personally requested me to plan and produce the Kuala Lumpur SEA Games for NBN. (I have a copy of the talent contract we both signed.) This despite her knowing that the civil case I filed against NBN was still pending in court. Apparently, she has little faith in the abilities of the network's producers and writers. Just last month, an NBN functionary kept calling me up for days to ask if I can help them with their belated bid for the upcoming Athens Olympics. Too late. A highly professional group beat them months ago."

In his parting shot to Quinito, Bong said: "I hope you'll include these corrections in a forthcoming column as Ms Concio's statements have put me in bad public light. And I don't even know what her motives are. Sour grapes?"

Your call, Mama Mia.

2 foreign bets fastest in AF3 practice runs



Super Prix roars off today

IRISHMAN John O' Hara and Australian Christian Jones submitted the fastest lap times during yesterday's 30-minute timed practices for the Addict Mobile Formula 3 Super Prix on Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

The rest of the country's brightest hopes in the main race, the first leg of the Philippine Formula 3 championship, joined the practice session.

O'Hara and Jones are two of the four foreigners competing in Sunday's two 12-lap races to be disputed by 14 drivers from seven teams.

Also expected on the starting grid are defending AF3 champ Jose Luis "Pepon" Marave, who is with O'Hara in the Kinetic Team Racing, Briton Mark Goddard and Tyson Sy of Minardi Team Asia, Jojo Silverio and Roland Hermoso of Speedtech Asia, Don and Enzo Pastor of Team Tom's, Mike Tuason and Carlos Anton of Team Autoplus, and Richard Joson and Japanese Kenkou Miura of JF3 Racing.

Though O'Hara and Jones were impressive in their practice runs, the Filipinos showed they can't be discounted for Sunday's race as they were still getting accustomed to their new cars.

O'Hara, the reigning Formula Ireland titlist, lived up to his brilliant European credentials with a best time of 1:25.65. For the year, he's partnered with Marave, who logged 1:27.65 yesterday, just off his personal target of 1:25.00.

O'Hara enjoys the luxury of riding a tested "champion car," a bright red Toyota-powered Dallara F301 Torii, which is strikingly similar to a Ferrari. It was the same vehicle which propelled Pepon to last year's AF3 title.

Powering along the straights and curves in his white Mugen Honda-engined Dallara F301, Jones clocked a second-best 1:25.90 to be one of the heavy favorites for the Philippine F3 championship.

The 24-year-old Jones won the final leg of last year's series.

With his engine upgraded, Jones will be racing alongside 16-year-old Dado Peña, who is fresh off a resounding stint in the Formula BMW Grand Prix in Bahrain recently while carrying the banner of Christian Jones Motorsport. Peña logged a best 1:31.77 yesterday.

O'Hara, competing in his rookie AF3 season, is still unfamiliar with the intricacies of the Batangas Racing Circuit, which he found "too bumpy."

"My car's perfect, though I'm still adjusting, both myself and the car," said O'Hara.

Marave encountered minor difficulties with his black Toyota-powered Dallara F301 Torii car worth P3 million. He said the chassis still needed some tuning. On Thursday, Marave took it around for four laps, the fastest of which was 1:28.0.

The two AF3 races will be shown live over NBN Channel 4 on Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Jao begins historic bid for 8th title

DEFENDING champion Jolet Jao opens his bid for a historic eighth crown in the Expert class today and tomorrow in the Shell Advance Superbikes Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

With the absence of last year's series runner-up, Toti Alberto of Ducati-Manila, and four other top riders (*see related story above right*), Jao is expected to rule the event, part of the PCSO Grand Prix which is also staging the 2004 Formula Toyota Cup Series at BRC.

Alberto and Benjo Mendoza of Speedeffex were two of the very few riders who managed to beat Jao in the series last year.

Young drivers Michelle Bumgarner, Tyson Sy, Ivan Carapiet, Arvin Drueco and Gaby de la Merced comprise the cast in the Formula Toyota Cup backed by Yokohama, Standard Insurance and MacNell Architectural Paints.

The Formula Toyota Cup poses another big challenge for lady driver Bumgarner who bagged the Karter of the Year title last year after emerging as Asian Zone Karting champion.

The Shell Superbikes series is sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Pilipinas Shell, Toyota Motors Philippines, Norkis Yamaha, Kilton Motors and MOF Company.

5 superbike riders to miss action

FIVE top superbike riders will miss the kickoff leg of the Shell Advance Superbikes Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit today because they have not fully prepared for it.

They are last year's runner-up Toti Alberto of Ducati Access Plus, Wacky del Rosario of Petron Blaze-Norkis Yamaha, Miguel Bichara of Ultrabikes Network, privateer Rolf Wiltschek and Julian Goitia of Double Appex Racing.

"We would like to apologize to our sponsors," said Del Rosario. "Fans expect tight action and we don't want to disappoint them."

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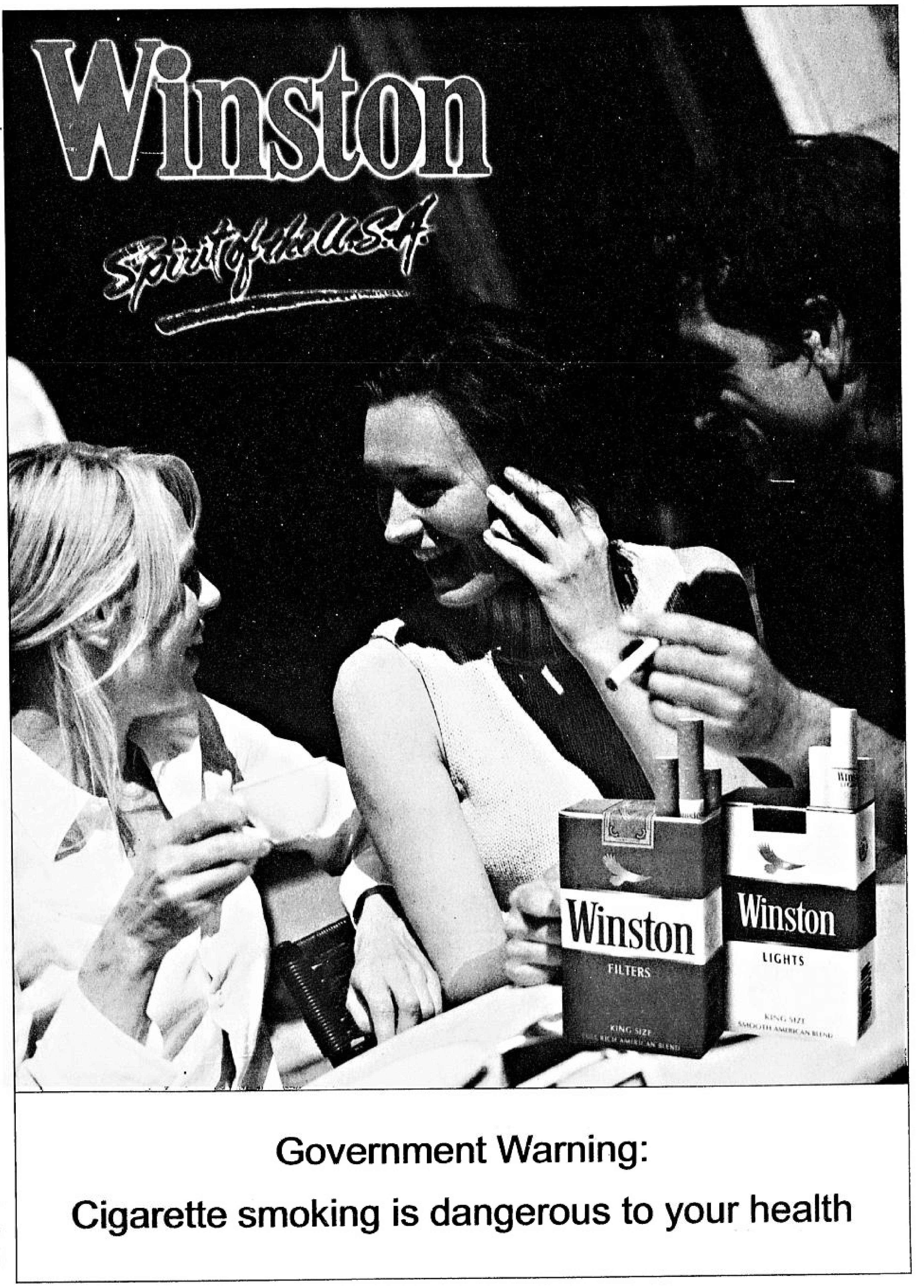

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Juvic boosts As-Pac cause in 2nd round

JUVIC Pagunsan rebounded from a so-so first round play in the Michael Bonnalack Trophy, winning one match and halving the other to help Asia-Pacific draw level with fancied Europe after two rounds of the Ryder Cup-style golf championship at the Circolo Golf Roma Acquasanta course in Rome Thursday.

Pagunsan teamed up with Ben Leong of Malaysia and routed the pair of Noel Fox and B. McElhinney, 5 & 4, as Asia-Pacific bounced back from a 1-4 rout Wednesday to win the second round's best-ball event, 3-2.

Also winning for the As-Pac squad were former US amateur champion Nick Flanagan of Australia, whose team-up with Bradley Iles proved too much for the pair of JW Van and Hugo Santos, 7 & 6; while James Nitties and Matthew Holten downed G. Fernandez and Castano, 4 & 3.

Asia-Pacific posted a 3-2 win in the alternate-shot format event, forcing a 10-10 standoff and reducing the three-day event into a shootout with the staging of the singles matches Friday.

Europe seized control in the first round, 6-4, with Pagunsan dropping his matches in the best-ball and in the alternate-shot event.

But the top Filipino amateur, whose stint is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission and backed by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Rod Feliciano, Benny Gopez, Mizuno and Canlubang, settled down and dished out the kind of game expected of him.

PAGUNSAN: In sharp form again ROGER CARPIO

Tonton, Jayvie spearhead Asian Juniors squad

TONTON Asistio, the 14-year-old who beat his older rivals for the Class A plum in the Callaway Junior World qualifying recently, will lead the Philippine delegation to the 25th Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Championships at the Damai Indah Golf and Country Club in Bumi Serbong Damai in Jakarta, Indonesia, early next month.

Asistio, a Manila Southwoods talent who has proven himself against the country's best players in the 15-17 years bracket, completed his masterful romp of the 44-player field with a 75 for a 54-hole aggregate of 220 that was three better than the 223 of Justin Tambunting, who scored a 76.

Asistio will be leaving for Jakarta together with 15 other young aces for the tourney on May 2.

The other RP bets are Jayvie Agojo who also won her division in the JW qualifier, Geleen Handog, Gino Bunyi, Allan John Miñoza, Aaron Dimabuyu, brother Junro and Chris Jordan Mamaril, Wolen Juan Superal and sister Crystal Faith, Mikee Camitoc, Adrian Woo, Joaquin Arroyo, Carlos Fabregas, Allan Guy and James Christian Ricohermoso.

Gerry Handog, international events committee head of the Jungolf Foundation of the Philippines, will lead the contingent. The other officials are Oscar Bunyi, Jun Agojo and Antonio Lascuna.

Jungolf chairwoman Amalia "Mommy" Montecillo, who is also among the founders of the Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Confederation, said that the team is strong enough to dominate the resumption of the event which was called off last year due to the SARS scare.

Tahanan rules Intervillage golf

TAHANAN, drawing 39 points from three of its mainstays, launched its bid for this year's Nokia Intervillage golf championship by ruling the first round of the south sector tournament at The Riviera in Silang, Cavite, last Monday.

Led by team captain Raffy Ilagan, team members Beng Ibo and Michael Tan, both 15-handicappers, and Lito dela Fuente (16) came through with 39 points apiece under the Stableford scoring system as the Tahanan golfers pooled 298 to beat their counterparts from the Alabang Hills in the kickoff leg of the annual event sponsored for the third straight year by Nokia.

Alabang Hills gained momentum from Glenda da Roza's solid 39 points at Riviera's Couples layout which Dodie Sison duplicated as the team finished second with 295 at the start of the 36-hole competition among villages in Parañaque, Muntinlupa and Las Piñas.

Alabang 400 wound up third with 285 while Marcelo Green Village had 284 to remain in the thick of the fight for one of the berths staked in the tournament backed by Alaxan, BJ Marthel International, Pisanti golf wear, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and 357 Boracay.

United BF Homes (278) and Merville Park (273) were also within sight of the leaders while BFRV Golfers Association (268), Levitown-Don Bosco (267) and Pilar Village Golf (255) have a lot of catching up to do when the final 18 holes of the sector tournament is played May 31 at Canlubang.

The top three teams in each of the four sectoral tournaments will advance to the grand finals, another 36-hole event with the top finisher winning the overall crown and the rest disputing the top honors in classes A, B and C.

SMC leads backers of Albert Cup tilt

SIX big groups yesterday backed the Secretary Delia Domingo Albert Invitational Golf Cup 2004 slated Thursday at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's West course.

Leading the sponsors in the 18-hole tournament the Department of Foreign Affairs and DFA Golfers Association are hosting is food and brewery giant San Miguel Corp.

The other major backers are Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), Government Service and Insurance System and Aliw Broadcasting Corp., which is owned by Ambassador to Laos Antonio L. Cabangon Chua.

"We would like to thank all our sponsors," said Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert yesterday. "With their support, we are assured of raising funds for our projects."

The funds the event will generate will be for the benefit of the DFA and DFA Golfers Association's scholarship program for children of low-salaried employees and out-of-school and abused children.

The event is under the aegis of organizing committee overall chair DFA Undersecretary Rafael E. Sequis and members Cabangon Chua and DFA Assistant Secretary Jaime Yambao.

Also involved in the project are ways and means committee chair DFA executive director Isaias Begonia, Rogelio Manalo of the Federation of Golf Clubs, lawyer Reynaldo Catapang and Wack Wack general manager Salvador Malbarosa.

Benjamin A. Ramos is secretariat committee chair while DFA's Marc Borja and Manny Austria are co-chair. Sylvia Marasigan, also of the DFA, is finance committee chairman.

PSA CUP SLATED
THE PHILIPPINE Sportswriters Association, through the Philippine Racing Commission, will hold the PSA Cup on May 16 at the Santa Ana Park in honor of the late Nereo Andolong, former chair and general manager of the PCSO, chair of the National Stud Farm and three-term president of the National Press Club. Signing the agreement are PSA president Jimmy Cantor (seated left) and Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag. Witnessing the signing are Philracom racing director Dr. Romeo Buencamino and PSA director Camilo Mendez.

JVC b'minton resumes

ACTION in the JVC Open Badminton 14-under Championships resumes today with the staging of the Round of 16 featuring the singles and doubles events in both the boys' and girls' divisions at SM-Pampanga.

Fancied Paul Vivas and Roden Rivera lead the men's singles cast in the two-day event.

Joining the hunt for quarterfinal berths in the tournament sponsored by electronics giant JVC are Raymond Alonzo, Peter Magnaye, John Patriwirawan, Patrique Magnaye, Angelito Flores, Jed Perez, Peter Tuliao and Randolph Balatbat.

The girls' side is headed by Valle Verde's Janina Paredes, last year's grand slam champion, whose shutout victory over Sierra Bravo in the first round installed her as one of the favorites in her side of the event exclusively for players 14 years old and below.

Out to foil her bid is the tandem of Mia Villarin and Monica Yupangco, who also posted lopsided victories in the mall-hopping tournament organized by IMG.

Top riders vying in Cebu Boardwalk motocross

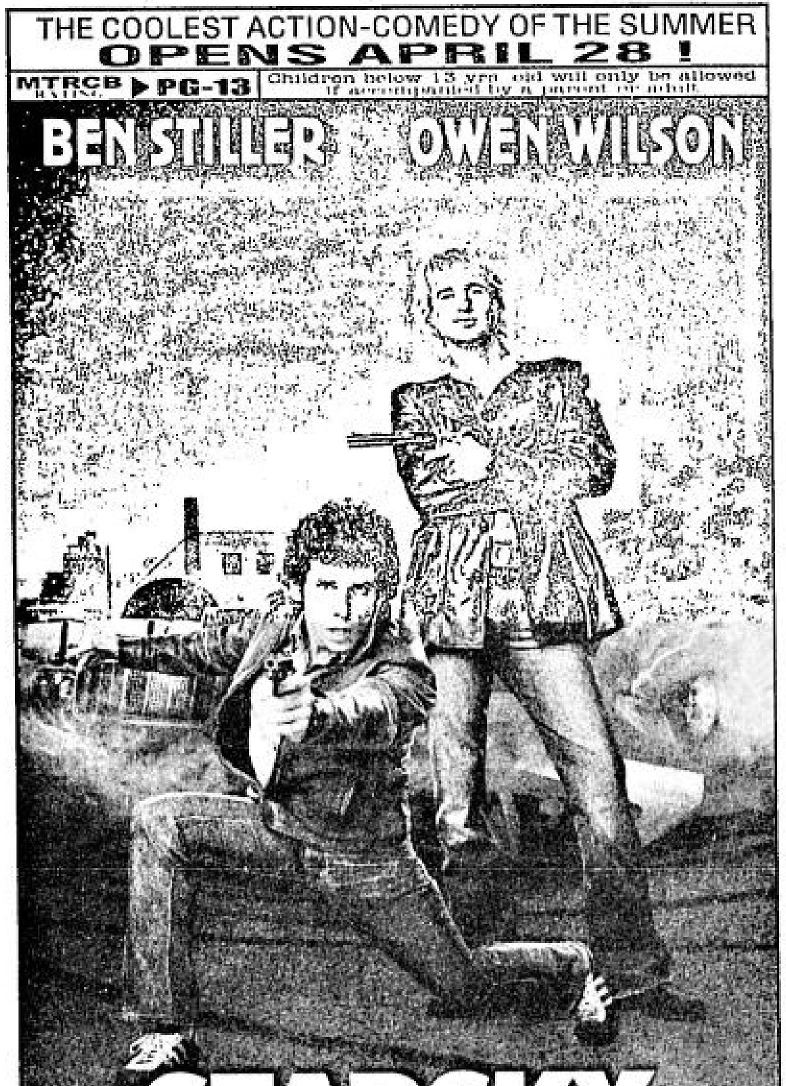
THE COUNTRY'S finest riders are seeing action in the second and third legs of the Cebu Boardwalk Motocross Series slated April 25 and May 1 at the Mandaue North Reclamation Racing Circuit.

Organizers F.F. Cruz and Co. Inc. (FFCCI) also breaks ground by holding the first back-to-back motocross races only a week apart. Twelve categories, including the Celebrity Class, will be disputed on May 1.

The series is co-presented by Shell Advance Motorcycle Oils and is sponsored by WG&A, Nature's Spring and Yamaha.

Eric A. Cruz, FFCCI executive vice president, said the Mandaue North Reclamation Circuit is part of a 3-hectare facility. Facing the Mactan Channel, the circuit has a 1,000-seat bleacher.

Some 120 riders have signed up for the races. The maiden race, held last Jan. 11, drew thousands of visitors and was held as part of the Sinulog Festival activities.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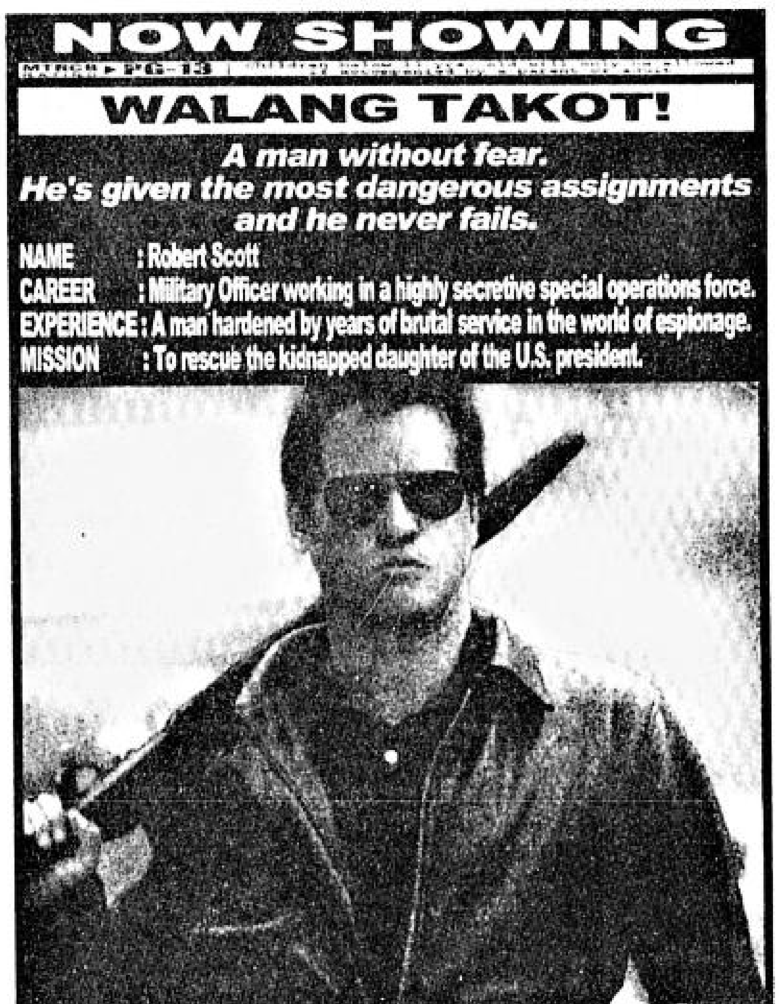
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CAREER : Military Officer working in a highly secretive special operations force.
EXPERIENCE : A man hardened by years of brutal service in the world of espionage.
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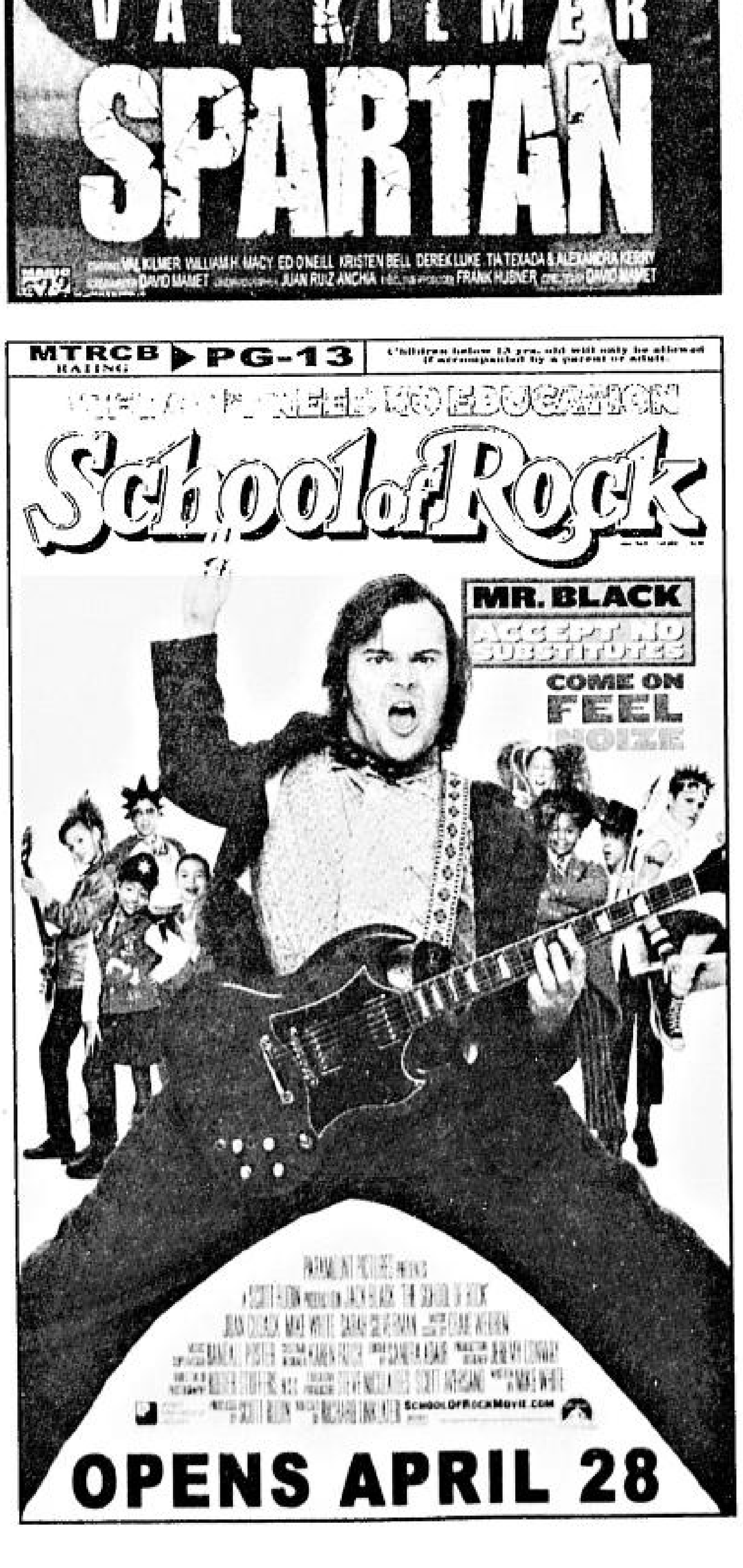
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Juvic boosts As-Pac cause in 2nd round

PAGUNSAN: In sharp form again ROGER CARPIO

JUVIC Pagunsan rebounded from a so-so first round play in the Michael Bonnalack Trophy, winning one match and halving the other to help Asia-Pacific draw level with fancied Europe after two rounds of the Ryder Cup-style golf championship at the Circolo Golf Roma Acquasanta course in Rome Thursday.

Pagunsan teamed up with Ben Leong of Malaysia and routed the pair of Noel Fox and B. McElhinney, 5 & 4, as Asia-Pacific bounced back from a 1-4 rout Wednesday to win the second round's best-ball event, 3-2.

Also winning for the As-Pac squad were former US amateur champion Nick Flanagan of Australia, whose team-up with Bradley Iles proved too much for the pair of JW Van and Hugo Santos, 7 & 6; while James Nitties and Matthew Holten downed G. Fernandez and Castano, 4 & 3.

Asia-Pacific posted a 3-2 win in the alternate-shot format event, forcing a 10-10 standoff and reducing the three-day event into a shootout with the staging of the singles matches Friday.

Europe seized control in the first round, 6-4, with Pagunsan dropping his matches in the best-ball and in the alternate-shot event.

But the top Filipino amateur, whose stint is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission and backed by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Rod Feliciano, Benny Gopez, Mizuno and Canlubang, settled down and dished out the kind of game expected of him.

Tonton, Jayvie spearhead Asian Juniors squad

TONTON Asistio, the 14-year-old who beat his older rivals for the Class A plum in the Callaway Junior World qualifying recently, will lead the Philippine delegation to the 25th Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Championships at the Damai Indah Golf and Country Club in Bumi Serbong Damai in Jakarta, Indonesia, early next month.

Asistio, a Manila Southwoods talent who has proven himself against the country's best players in the 15-17 years bracket, completed his masterful romp of the 44-player field with a 75 for a 54-hole aggregate of 220 that was three better than the 223 of Justin Tambunting, who scored a 76.

Asistio will be leaving for Jakarta together with 15 other young aces for the tourney on May 2.

The other RP bets are Jayvie Agojo who also won her division in the JW qualifier, Geleen Handog, Gino Bunyi, Allan John Miñoza, Aaron Dimabuyu, brother Junro and Chris Jordan Mamaril, Wolen Juan Superal and sister Crystal Faith, Mikee Camitoc, Adrian Woo, Joaquin Arroyo, Carlos Fabregas, Allan Guy and James Christian Ricohermoso.

Gerry Handog, international events committee head of the Jungolf Foundation of the Philippines, will lead the contingent. The other officials are Oscar Bunyi, Jun Agojo and Antonio Lascuna.

Jungolf chairwoman Amalia "Mommy" Montecillo, who is also among the founders of the Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Confederation, said that the team is strong enough to dominate the resumption of the event which was called off last year due to the SARS scare.

Tahanan rules Intervillage golf

TAHANAN, drawing 39 points from three of its mainstays, launched its bid for this year's Nokia Intervillage golf championship by ruling the first round of the south sector tournament at The Riviera in Silang, Cavite, last Monday.

Led by team captain Raffy Ilagan, team members Beng Ibo and Michael Tan, both 15-handicappers, and Lito dela Fuente (16) came through with 39 points apiece under the Stableford scoring system as the Tahanan golfers pooled 298 to beat their counterparts from the Alabang Hills in the kickoff leg of the annual event sponsored for the third straight year by Nokia.

Alabang Hills gained momentum from Glenda da Roza's solid 39 points at Riviera's Couples layout which Dodie Sison duplicated as the team finished second with 295 at the start of the 36-hole competition among villages in Parañaque, Muntinlupa and Las Piñas.

Alabang 400 wound up third with 285 while Marcelo Green Village had 284 to remain in the thick of the fight for one of the berths staked in the tournament backed by Alaxan, BJ Marthel International, Pisanti golf wear, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and 357 Boracay.

United BF Homes (278) and Merville Park (273) were also within sight of the leaders while BFRV Golfers Association (268), Levitown-Don Bosco (267) and Pilar Village Golf (255) have a lot of catching up to do when the final 18 holes of the sector tournament is played May 31 at Canlubang.

The top three teams in each of the four sectoral tournaments will advance to the grand finals, another 36-hole event with the top finisher winning the overall crown and the rest disputing the top honors in classes A, B and C.

SMC leads backers of Albert Cup tilt

SIX big groups yesterday backed the Secretary Delia Domingo Albert Invitational Golf Cup 2004 slated Thursday at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's West course.

Leading the sponsors in the 18-hole tournament the Department of Foreign Affairs and DFA Golfers Association are hosting is food and brewery giant San Miguel Corp.

The other major backers are Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), Government Service and Insurance System and Aliw Broadcasting Corp., which is owned by Ambassador to Laos Antonio L. Cabangon Chua.

"We would like to thank all our sponsors," said Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert yesterday. "With their support, we are assured of raising funds for our projects."

The funds the event will generate will be for the benefit of the DFA and DFA Golfers Association's scholarship program for children of low-salaried employees and out-of-school and abused children.

The event is under the aegis of organizing committee overall chair DFA Undersecretary Rafael E. Sequis and members Cabangon Chua and DFA Assistant Secretary Jaime Yambao.

Also involved in the project are ways and means committee chair DFA executive director Isaias Begonia, Rogelio Manalo of the Federation of Golf Clubs, lawyer Reynaldo Catapang and Wack Wack general manager Salvador Malbarosa.

Benjamin A. Ramos is secretariat committee chair while DFA's Marc Borja and Manny Austria are co-chair. Sylvia Marasigan, also of the DFA, is finance committee chairman.

PSA CUP SLATED
THE PHILIPPINE Sportswriters Association, through the Philippine Racing Commission, will hold the PSA Cup on May 16 at the Santa Ana Park in honor of the late Nereo Andolong, former chair and general manager of the PCSO, chair of the National Stud Farm and three-term president of the National Press Club. Signing the agreement are PSA president Jimmy Cantor (seated left) and Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag. Witnessing the signing are Philracom racing director Dr. Romeo Buencamino and PSA director Camilo Mendez.

JVC b'minton resumes

ACTION in the JVC Open Badminton 14-under Championships resumes today with the staging of the Round of 16 featuring the singles and doubles events in both the boys' and girls' divisions at SM-Pampanga.

Fancied Paul Vivas and Roden Rivera lead the men's singles cast in the two-day event.

Joining the hunt for quarterfinal berths in the tournament sponsored by electronics giant JVC are Raymond Alonzo, Peter Magnaye, John Patriwirawan, Patrique Magnaye, Angelito Flores, Jed Perez, Peter Tuliao and Randolph Balatbat.

The girls' side is headed by Valle Verde's Janina Paredes, last year's grand slam champion, whose shutout victory over Sierra Bravo in the first round installed her as one of the favorites in her side of the event exclusively for players 14 years old and below.

Out to foil her bid is the tandem of Mia Villarin and Monica Yupangco, who also posted lopsided victories in the mall-hopping tournament organized by IMG.

Top riders vying in Cebu Boardwalk motocross

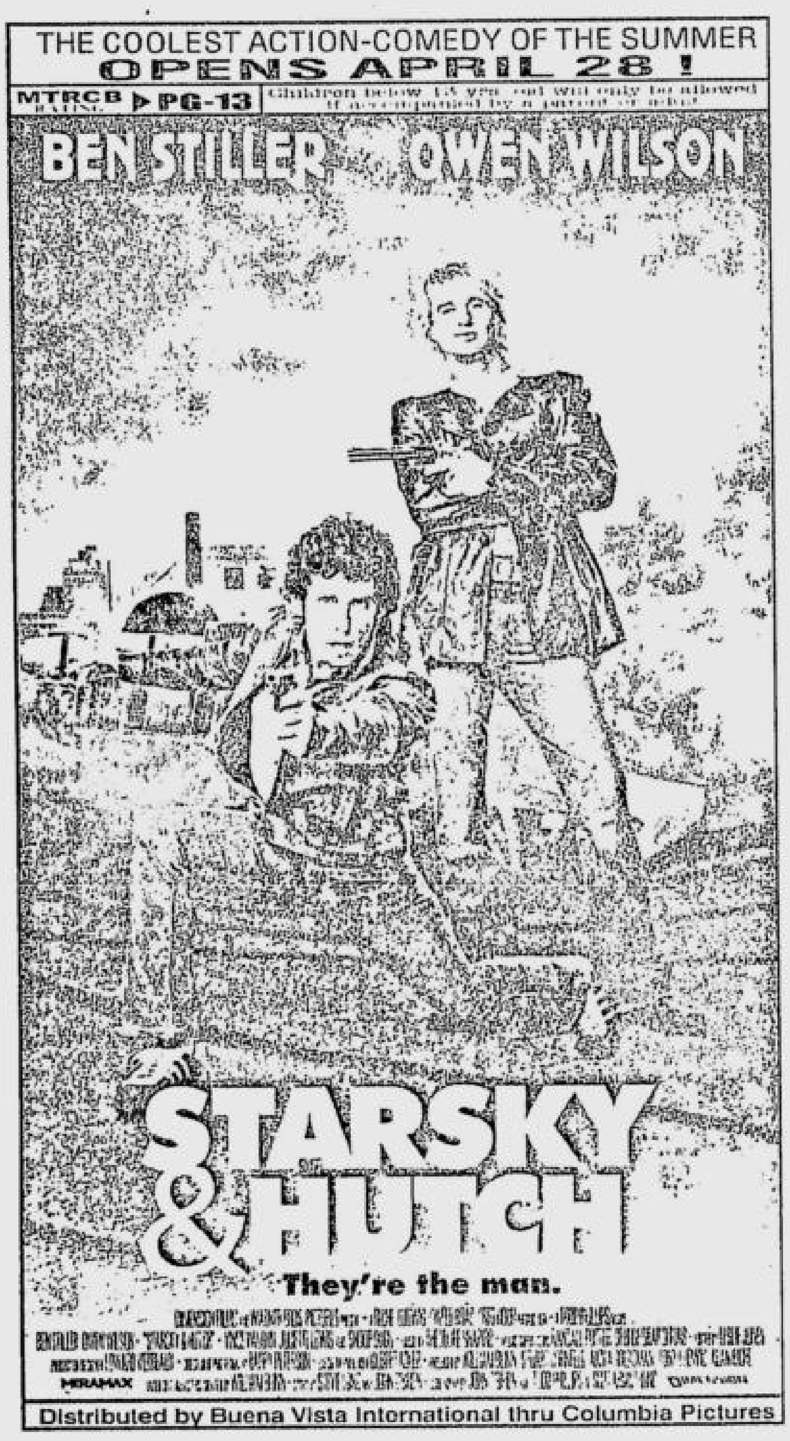
THE COUNTRY'S finest riders are seeing action in the second and third legs of the Cebu Boardwalk Motocross Series slated April 25 and May 1 at the Mandaue North Reclamation Racing Circuit.

Organizers F.F. Cruz and Co. Inc. (FFCCI) also breaks ground by holding the first back-to-back motocross races only a week apart. Twelve categories, including the Celebrity Class, will be disputed on May 1.

The series is co-presented by Shell Advance Motorcycle Oils and is sponsored by WG&A, Nature's Spring and Yamaha.

Eric A. Cruz, FFCCI executive vice president, said the Mandaue North Reclamation Circuit is part of a 3-hectare facility. Facing the Mactan Channel, the circuit has a 1,000-seat bleacher.

Some 120 riders have signed up for the races. The maiden race, held last Jan. 11, drew thousands of visitors and was held as part of the Sinulog Festival activities.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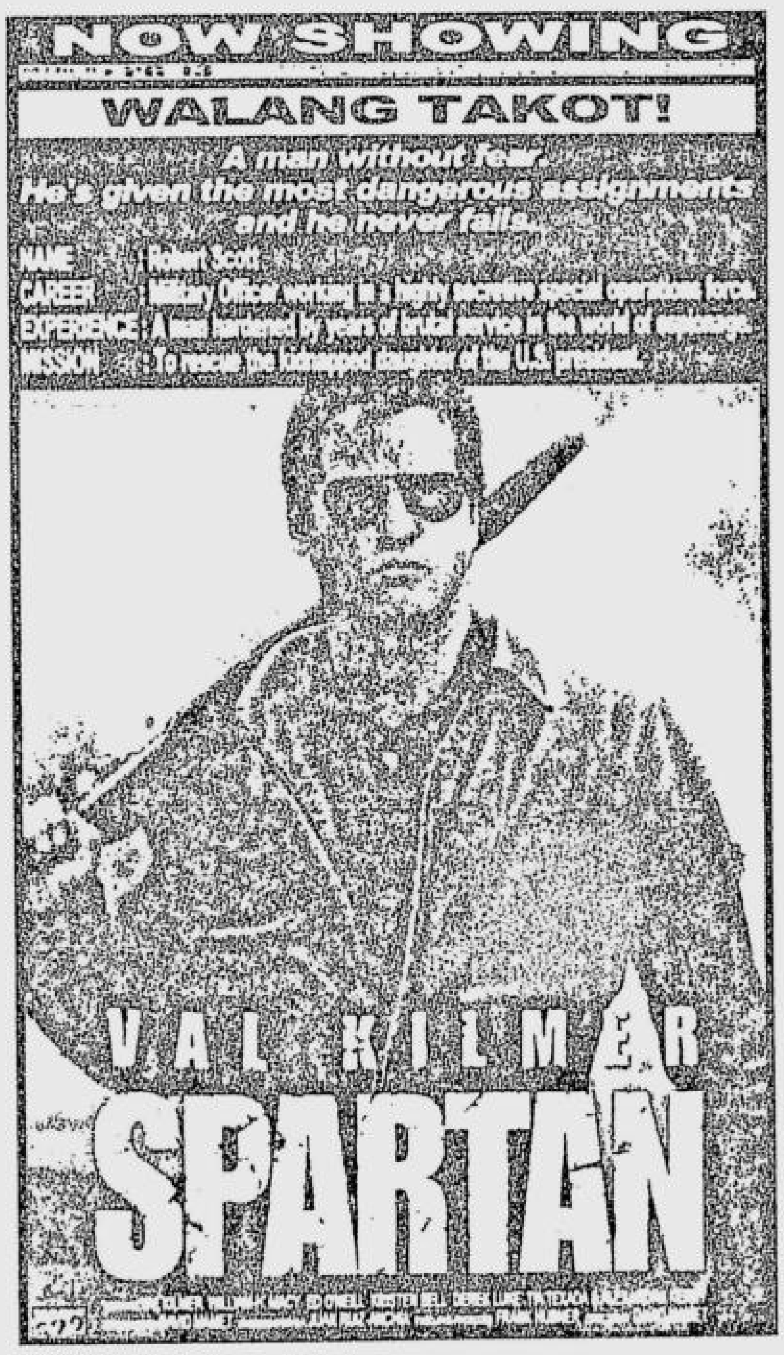

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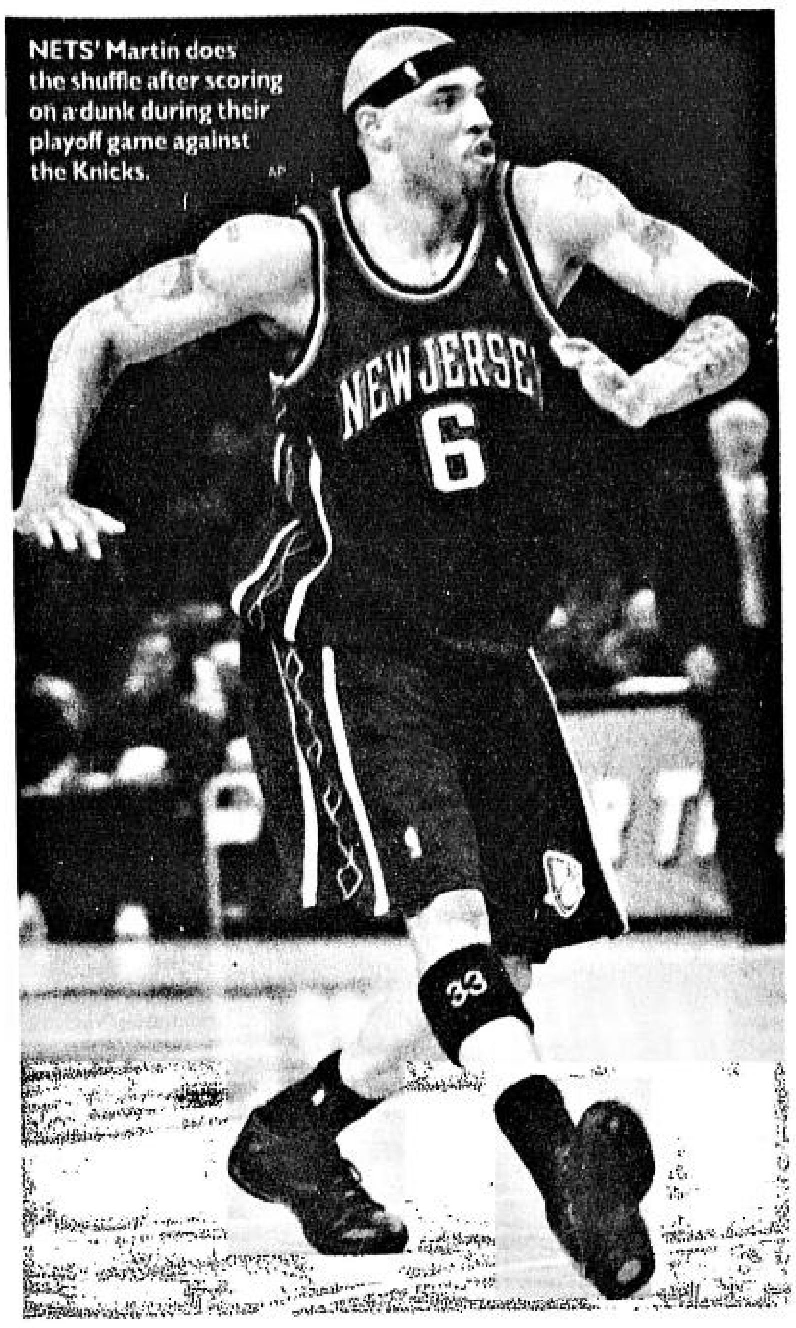

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American League

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National League

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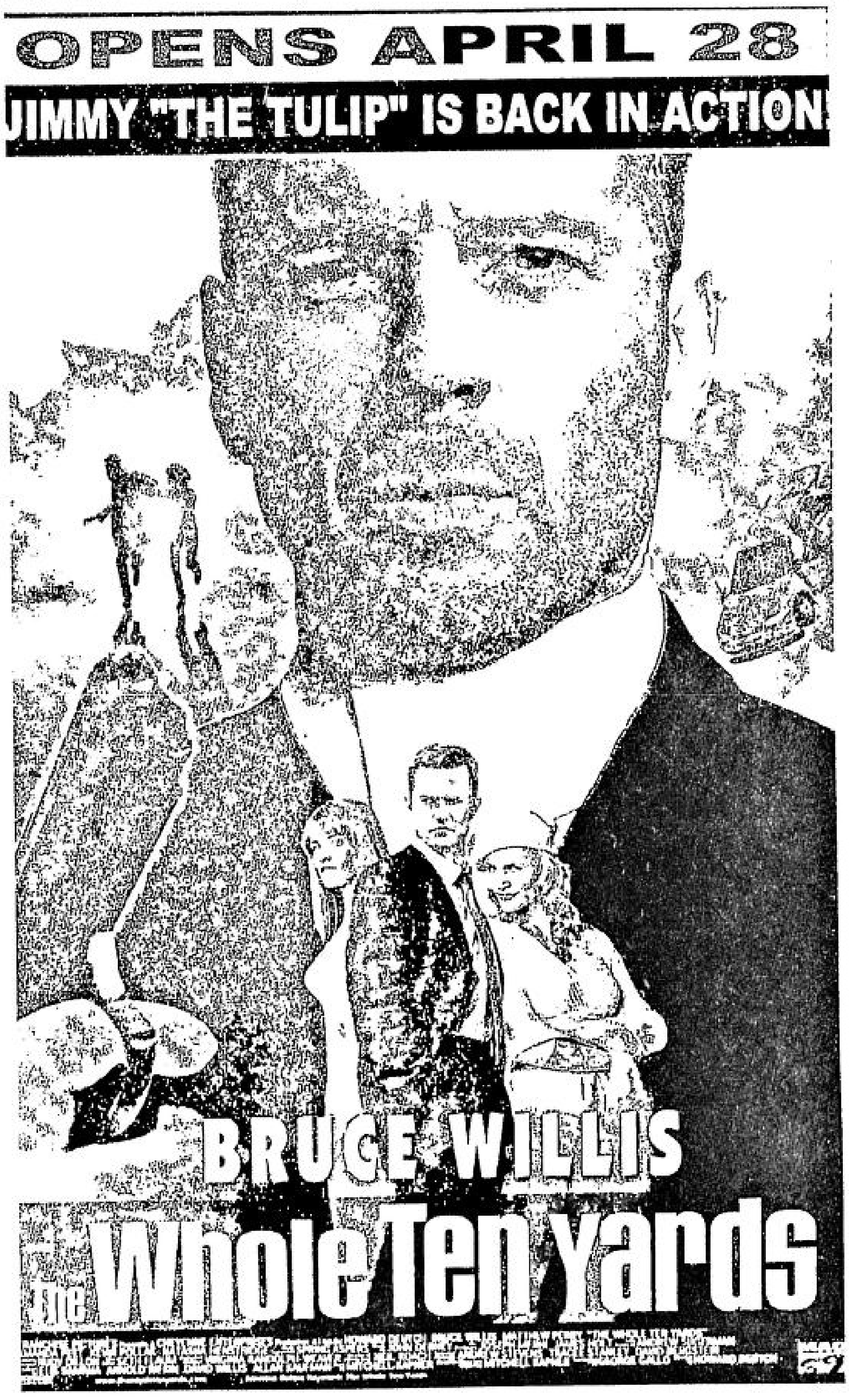

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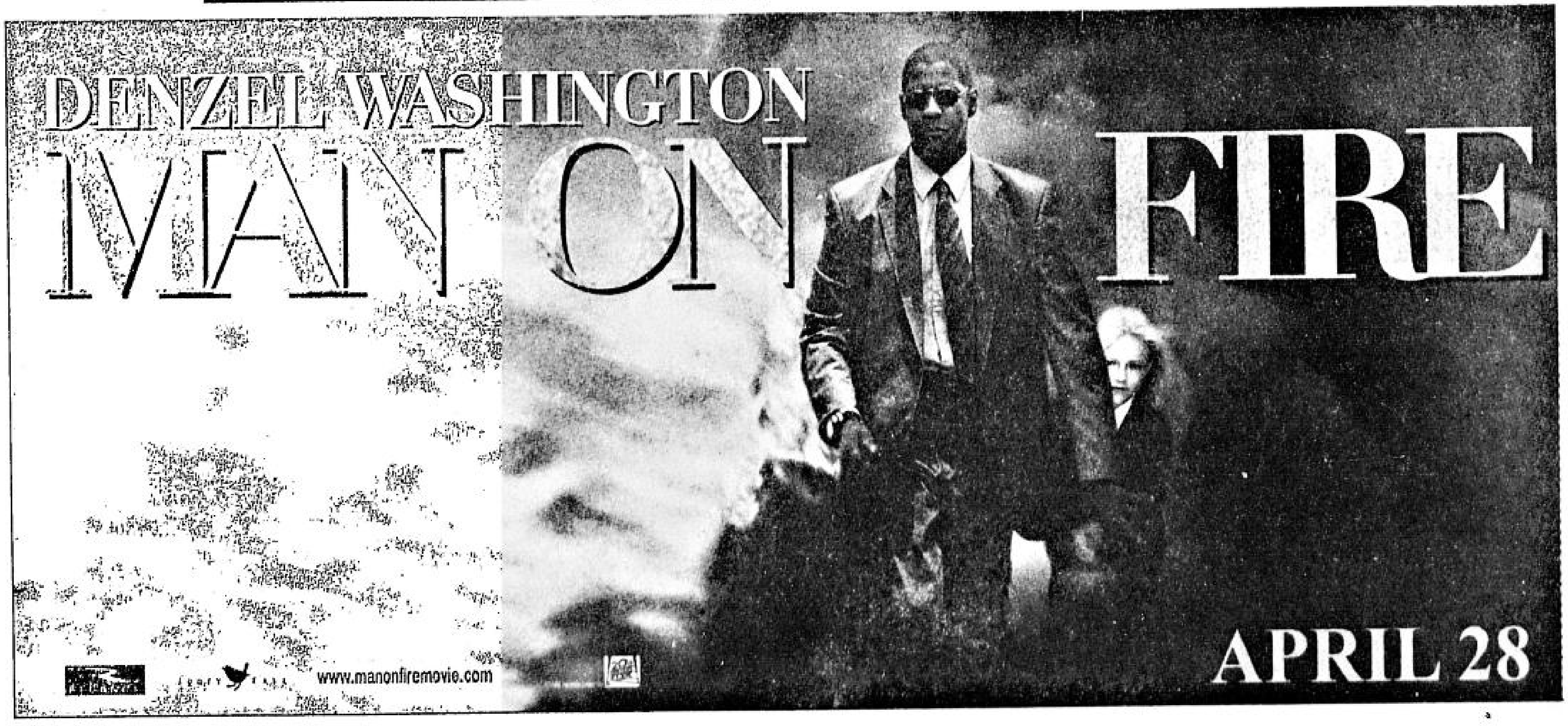

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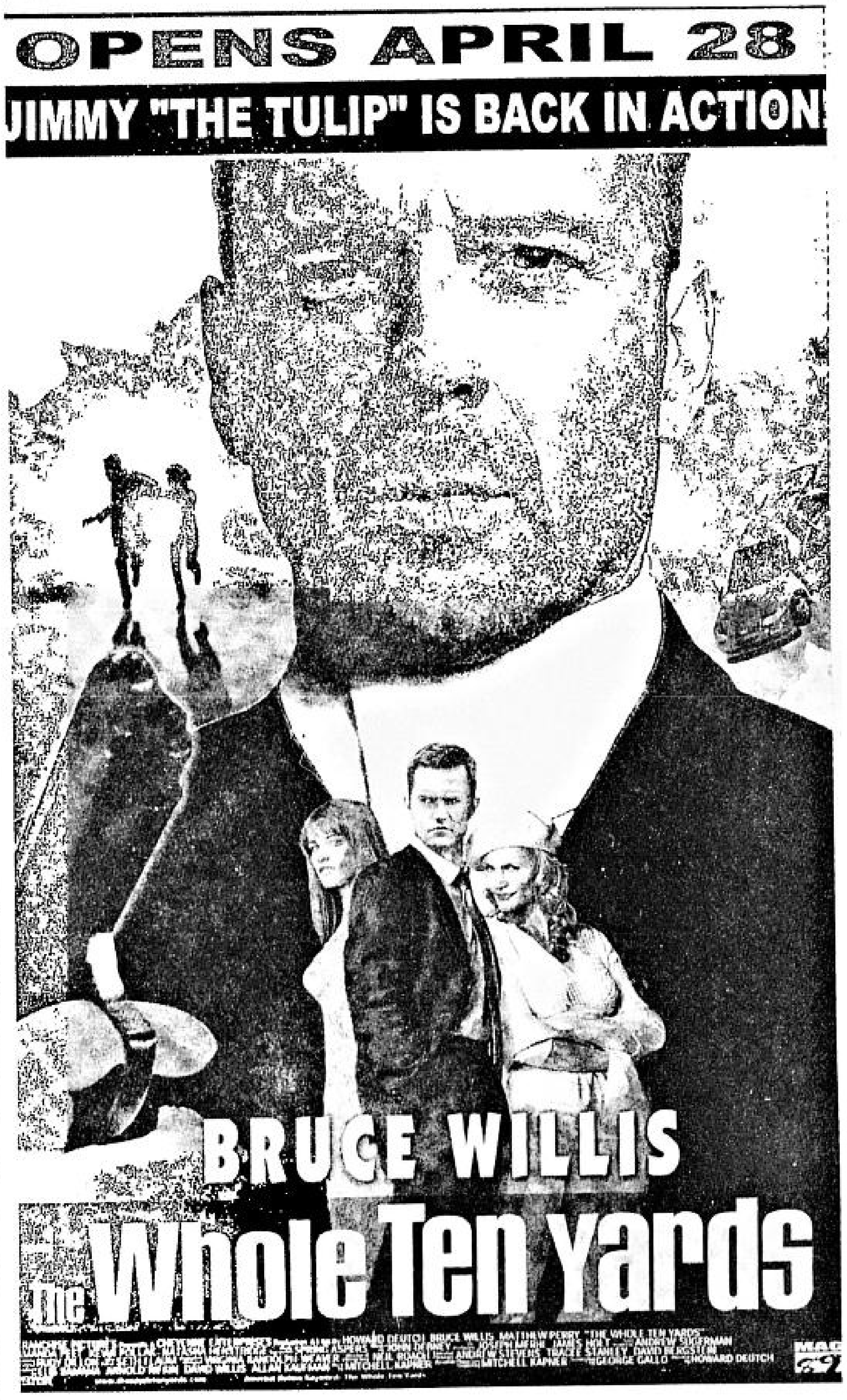

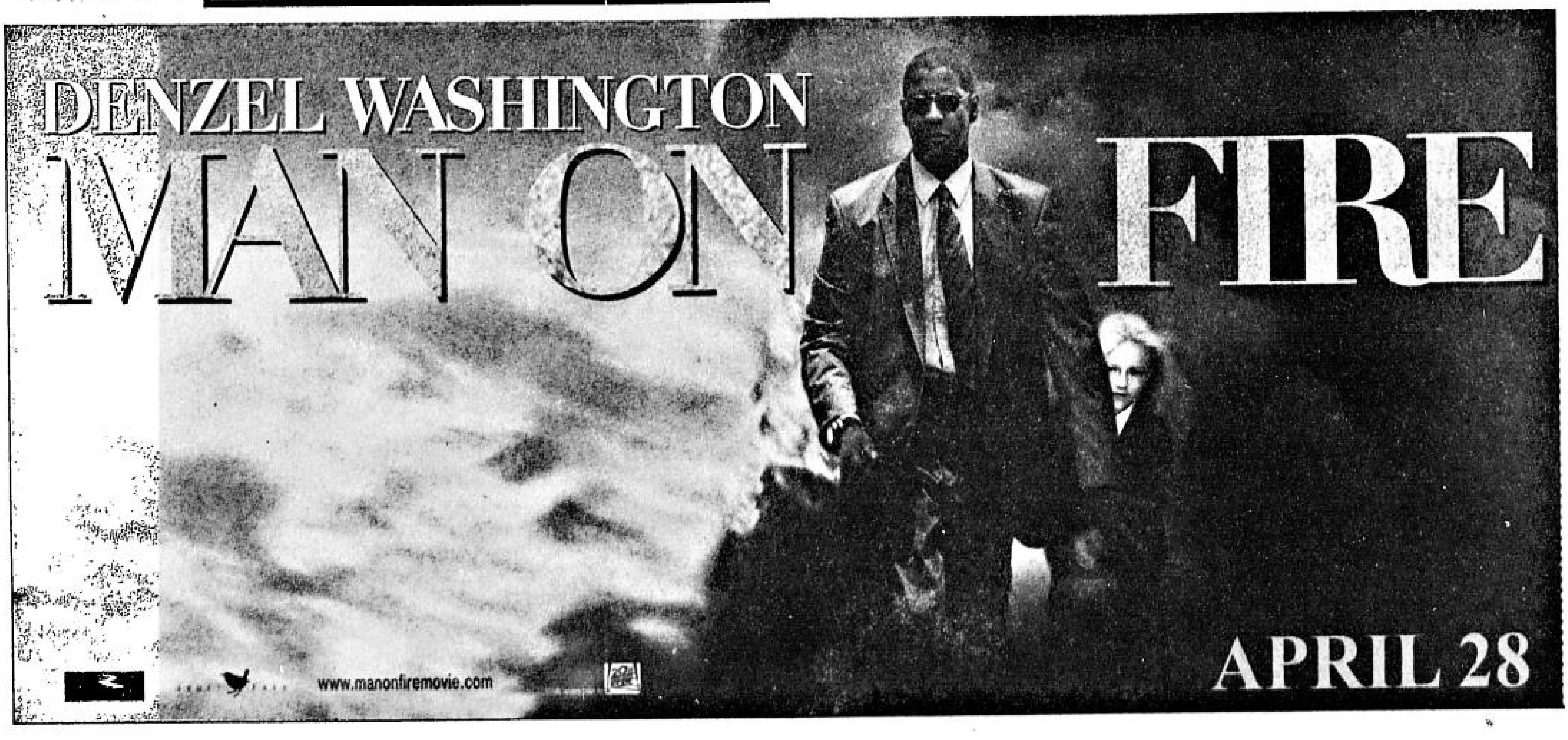

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11 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
12 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PETER PAN
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 ACACIA
5 SPARTAN
6 TAKING LIVES
7 HELLBOY
8 PAYCHECK

SM CITY STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 TAKING LIVES
3 HELLBOY
4 PAYCHECK
5 SPARTAN
6 ACACIA
7 PETER PAN
8 TWISTED
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 CHECK INN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 HELLBOY
2 SPARTAN
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 CHECK INN

North

SM CITY MARILAO
(044) 933 2013 to 17

1 HELLBOY
2 PETER PAN
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7126015

1 HELL BOY
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PAYCHECK
4 KARIBAL
5 HIGHMAYMEN
6 BOOBITA ROSE

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 BONE SNATCHER
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 HELLBOY

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066888

1 ACACIA
2 PETER PAN
3 HELL BOY
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 TAKING LIVES
6 SCOOBY DOO 2
7 BOOBITA ROSE
8 SPARTAN
9 PAYCHECK
10 CHECK INN

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763055

1 HELLBOY
2 BOOBITA ROSE
3 SPARTAN
4 PAYCHECK

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 SPARTAN
3 HELLBOY
4 PAYCHECK

SM CITY BACOOR
(046)4173868

1 ACACIA
2 PETER PAN
3 SPARTAN
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 HELL BOY
6 BOOBITA ROSE
7 PAYCHECK
8 CHECK INN

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7100977-80

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 HIDALGO
4 BOOBITA ROSE

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
(032) 2313876

1 DON'T TEMPT ME
2 TAKING LIVES
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 LOVE ACTUALLY
5 GRUDGE 2
6 SORUM
7 BOOBITA ROSE
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY ILOILO
(033) 3209422

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 RESERVED
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 HIDALGO
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 RESERVED
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

SM CITY DAVAO
(082) 2976998

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE GRUDGE 2
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
6 TAKING LIVES

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592684

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 GRUDGE 2
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

—THE— PODIUM CINEMA

1
PAYCHECK
12:10 FS/12:40 MF/ 3:15/ 5:50/ 8:25/ 10:25 LFS/ 11:00 LMF/1:00 END

2
HELLBOY
12:10 FS / 12:40 MF/ 3:15/ 5:50 / 8:25 / 10:25 LFS / 11:00 LMF/ 1:05 END

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CINEMA 1 THX
HELLBOY 11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

2 SPARTAN 10 20, 12.40, 3 00, 5 20, 7 40, 10.00
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12 40, 3 15, 3 00, 5 50, 8 25, 10.30
4 PAYCHECK 10:20, 12.40, 3 00, 5 20, 7:40, 10.00
5 HELLBOY 11 30, 2 10, 4 50, 7 30, 10-10
6 TAKING LIVES 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7.35, 9.50
7 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11 55, 2 05, 4 15, 6 25, 8 35, 10 35
8 PETER PAN 12 30, 2 50, 5 10, 7.30, 9 45
9 TWISTED 11.15, 1 20, 3.25, 5.30, 7 35, 9 40
10 50 FIRST DATES 11 55, 2 05, 4.15, 6 25, 8.35, 10.35

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1 HELLBOY 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
2 PAYCHECK 11 30, 1.40, 3 50, 6 00, 8 05, 10 00
3 TAKING LIVES 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7.35, 9 50
4 SPARTAN 10 10, 12 25, 2 40, 4 55, 7 10, 9.40
5 PETER PAN 10 15, 12 30, 2.50, 5.10, 7.30, 9.50
6 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 10 10, 12 25, 2 50, 2 40, 4 55, 7 10, 9.40
7 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11 50, 2 30, 5 10, 7.45, 10.00

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 SPARTAN 11:10, 1 40, 4 10, 6 40, 9:10
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10 40, 1 20, 4 00, 6 40, 9 30
3 TAKING LIVES 11 00, 1:00, 3 00, 5 00, 7.00, 9 20
4 PETER PAN 10 05, 12 05, 2.15, 4.25, 6.40, 9 00
5 HELLBOY 10.55, 1.25, 3 55, 6:25, 9.00
6 CHECK-IN 11.00, 1.00, 3.00, 5 00, 7.00, 9 00
7 PAYCHECK 10 25, 1 05, 2 45, 6 25, 9.05
8 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11 40, 2 15, 4 50, 7 25, 10 00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

1 HELLBOY 11:20, 1.35, 3 50, 6.05, 8.30
2 SPARTAN 11 45, 1-55, 4 05, 6 15, 8 30
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11.20, 1 35, 3 50, 6 05, 8 30
4 TAKING LIVES 12 00, 2 00, 4 00, 6 00, 8 10
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12 20, 3 00, 5 40, 8 30
6 PAYCHECK 11 45, 1.55, 4.05, 6 15, 8.30
7 PETER PAN 11 20, 1 35, 3.50, 6 05, 8 30
8 THE UNINVITED 11 00, 1 20, 3 40, 6 00, 8 30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HELLBOY
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 CHECK-IN

big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661

1 HELLBOY
2 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
3 CHECK-IN
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907

1 HELLBOY
2 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
3 HIGHWAYMEN
4 KARIBAL
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870

1 PAYCHECK
2 PETER PAN
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 ACACIA

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HELLBOY
3 HELLBOY
4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
5 PAYCHECK

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando, Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270

1 TAKING LIVES
2 KARIBAL
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 HIGHWAYMEN
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 THX HELLBOY

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858

1 HELLBOY
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 CHECK-IN
4 SPARTAN
5 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
6 PAYCHECK

BACOLOD 441-0458/59

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE GRUDGE 2
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 50 FIRST DATES
6 THE CURSE

ILOILO 336-8070/78

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HIDALGO
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 50 FIRST DATES
6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

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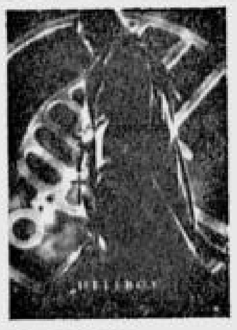

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Chess classes May 3

THE RIVERBANKS Center in Marikina City will host Milo Checkmate summer chess classes at the Riverbanks Mall Stage Area on May 3-7 and a 2050 below active chess on May 8.

The chess classes is open to kids five years old and above and will be conducted daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Organized by Metropolitan Chess Club, interested parties may call MCC office at 435-8412 or 09168521069 or at Riverbanks Sales and Marketing Dept. c/o Pol Dalisay with tel. 934-1789.

Enduro race on

ADVENTURE racers and sports enthusiasts are expected to come in droves for the 1st Leg of the Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race Series 2004 today in Boracay Island.

Racers will steer their way and uncover scenic spots of Boracay for this kick-off race.

This is the last call for hard-core athletes and adventure seekers to join the best of the best for this prestigious adventure race. Just log on to www.sanmiglight.com.ph, call Enduro Hotline (02) 4128660 or text 386 (for Smart and Talk 'N Text subscribers).

The Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race is powered by low-calorie, less-filling San Mig Light, in cooperation with Bombproof and Tribu.

San Jose derby set

BEXAN-XP, joins the people of San Jose, Antique, in the celebration of their town fiesta as the potent blood conditioner for fighting cocks sponsors the San Jose 5-Cock Fiesta Derby on April 27-30.

Set at the Antique Sports Development Center, the 3-day event hosted by Viong Ong (036)540-8247 offers a guaranteed cash prize of P300,000 for a split entry fee of P3,000 in the elimination and P3,000 in the championship.

Also backed by Bexan-XP is Baby Dungo's 3-Cocker today at the Concepcion Amusement Center in Bgy. Minane, Concepcion, Tarlac.

3-cock tonight

ABOUT 40 entries are entered in a 3-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Sponsored by Sagupaan Complexer 3000, the event has an entry fee of P5,500 and a cash prize of P300,000.

LPC manager Alex Tobias said Derby hosts are Las Piñas handlers Alan, Jerome and Alex Braza.

Participants must submit entries from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. today and may call 873-1040 for details.

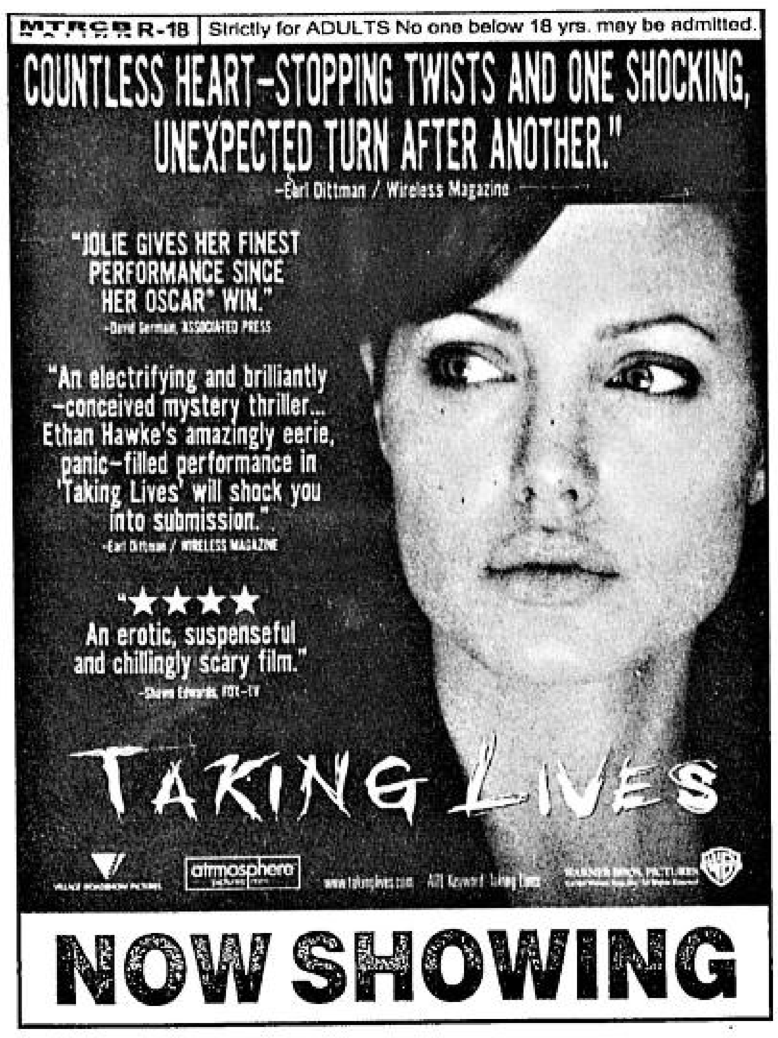
Maradona out of danger

BUENOS AIRES—Argentine football legend Diego Maradona came off the critical list Thursday as his family and supporters vowed to take action to protect him from the "bad influences" that caused his downfall.

Maradona, who has been battling a drug addiction for years, has been in intensive care with acute heart and breathing problems since Sunday and was at times reported to be fighting for his life.

Doctors said they hoped to take the 43-year-old off a respirator within 24 hours.

AFP


MTRCB R-18 | Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.

COUNTLESS HEART-STOPPING TWISTS AND ONE SHOCKING, UNEXPECTED TURN AFTER ANOTHER."
-Earl Dittman / Wireless Magazine

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-David Germain, ASSOCIATED PRESS

"An electrifying and brilliantly-conceived mystery thriller... Ethan Hawke's amazingly eerie, panic-filled performance in 'Taking Lives' will shock you into submission."
-Earl Dittman / WIRELESS MAGAZINE

"★★★★ An erotic, suspenseful and chillingly scary film."
-Shawn Edwards, FOX-TV

TAKING LIVES

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Walt Disney

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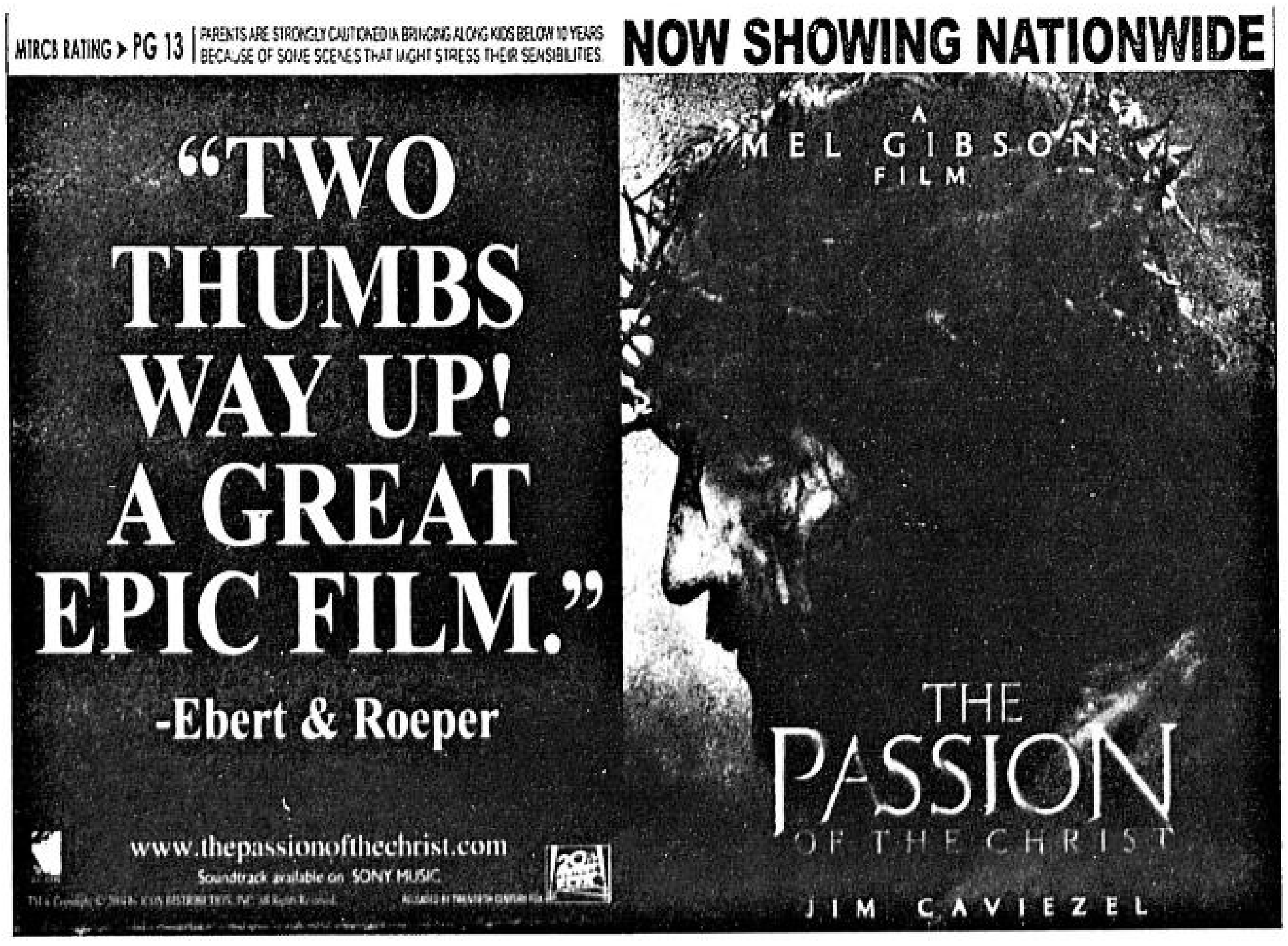
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG 13 | PARENTS ARE STRONGLY CAUTIONED IN BRINGING ALONG KIDS BELOW 10 YEARS BECAUSE OF SOME SCENES THAT MIGHT STRESS THEIR SENSIBILITIES

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THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

JIM CAVIEZEL

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	HELLBOY
Ali 4	SPARTAN
Ali 5	PAYCHECK
Ali 6	TWISTED
Ali 7	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

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APR 30	ANDREA BOCELLI LIVE IN MANILA
MAY 1	PBA : ALASKA VS. SHELL
MAY 2	PBA : RED BULL VS. FEDEX
MAY 3	AMA GRADUATION
MAY 4	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAY 5	PBA : ALASKA VS. STA. LUCIA
MAY 6	NCA7-COCK DERBY

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	CHECK -INN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	CHECK -IN
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-2	CHECK INN
CINEMA-3	TWISTED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-6	NIGHTMARE
CINEMA-7	ACACIA
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPARTAN
CINEMA-12	PETER PAN
CINEMA-14	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	PETER PAN
CINEMA-4	50 FIRST DATES

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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CINEMA 1
HELLBOY
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
P13

CINEMA 2
SPARTAN
11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50
P13

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MAY 1 & 2	"MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL"	4:00PM

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1 (SDDS)	MISSING
2 (SDDS)	HELLBOY
3 (DTS)	PAYCHECK
4 GOLD (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	SPARTAN
6 GOLD (SDDS)	TAKING LIVES
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
8	BOOBITA ROSE
9	TWISTED
10	PETER PAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK
2 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
3 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
4 (DOLBY)	PETER PAN

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	CHECK INN
2	HELLBOY
3	BOOBITA ROSE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	SPARTAN
	HELLBOY
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	CHECK INN
5	

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	SPARTAN
2	CHECK INN
3	TAKING LIVES
4	BOOBITA ROSE
5	HELLBOY
6	PAYCHECK

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004

1	HELLBOY
2	TWISTED

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	50 FIRST DATE
2	SCOOBY DOO-2

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	GHOST HOUSE
2	TUMITIBOK KUMIKIROT
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

5	RESERVE
6	
7 (DTS)	
8 (SDDS)	
9 (DOLBY)	

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	CHECK INN
2	PETER PAN
3	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (SDDS)	HELLBOY
5	RESERVE
6 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
7 (DTS)	RESERVE
8	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1	RESERVE
2 (SDDS)	
3 (DTS)	
4 (DOLBY)	
5	

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS)	TWISTED
4	CHECK INN
5 (SDDS)	HELLBOY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

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1	HELLBOY
2	SPARTAN
3	CHECK INN
4	RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	SPARTAN
2	THE CURSE
3	CHECK - INN
4	BOOBITA ROSE
5	HELLBOY

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	HIGHWAYMEN
2	CHECK INN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7

1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HELLBOY
4 (SDDS)	SPARTAN
5 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
6	TWISTED
7	BOOBITA ROSE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	HELLBOY
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS EX)	TAKING LIVES
4	GRUDGE 2

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	PAYCHECK
3 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
4 (DTS)	TAKING LIVES

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	WISE GIRL
3 (DOLBY)	HIDALGO
4 (DTS)	UNINVITED

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	PAYCHECK
3 (DTS)	HELLBOY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2 (DTS)	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
4	PAYCHECK

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
3 (DTS)	PAYCHECK
4	HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	HAUNTED OFFICE
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DOLBY)	HIDALGO

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	HIGHWAY MEN
3 (DOLBY)	BONE SNATCHERS
4 (DTS)	THE GRUDGE-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1	PASSION OF CHRIST
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3	HELLBOY

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	UNINVITED
2	BUKAS MAY LIGAYA
3	PORNOGRAPHER
4 (DTS)	SEX EDUCATION

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HELLBOY
2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
4	KARIBAL
5	HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	PURI
2	ACACIA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	HELLBOY
2	ACACIA
3	PAY CHECK

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	PETER PAN
2	ACACIA
3 (DTS)	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (DOLBY)	50 FIRST DATES

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3	PAYCHECK
4	PETER PAN

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	VENUS

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

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SCOOBY-DOO 2
NOW SHOWING

MASTERS TOURNEY

Hewitt tumbles

MONACO—Fiesty Australian Lleyton Hewitt came close to another miracle escape at the Monte Carlo Masters here on Thursday before going down to a third round 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 defeat to German fourth seed Rainer Schuettler.

Hewitt, seeded 14 here, had come from a set down in the first round to beat France's Julien Benneteau. He repeated the escape act, as well as saving two match points, against Gaston Gaudio of Argentina in the second round before finally coming up short against the German.

Schuettler now faces Britain's sixth seed Tim Henman who came back from a set down to defeat Chilean ninth seed Nicolas Massu, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Henman was a semifinalist here in 2002 beating Massu on the way but he got off to a disastrous start dropping serve four times in the first set. The Briton won his first ever Masters title in Paris last year and he believes that has contributed to him having a new attitude on court.

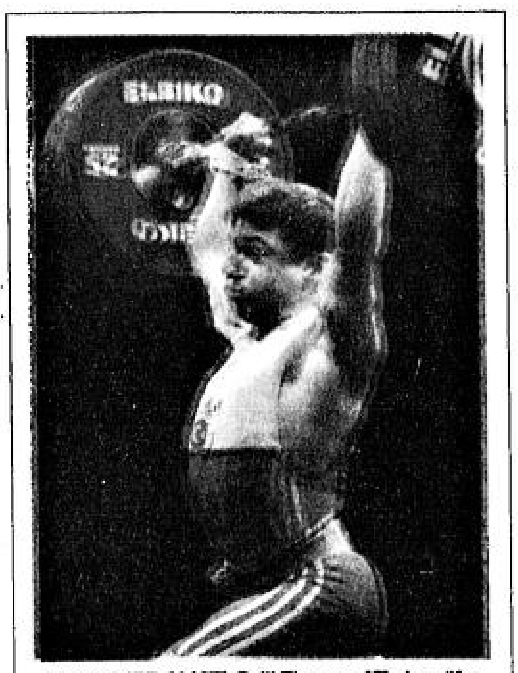
Argentinian third seed Guillermo Coria and former world number one Marat Safin of Russia also moved into the last eight.

Coria clinched a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 win over Romania's Andrei Pavel while Safin, battling his way back up the rankings after a 2003 decimated by a wrist injury, cruised past Australian veteran Wayne Arthurs 6-4, 6-2. *AFP*

Parents sue Anna

MIAMI BEACH, Florida—Anna Kournikova is being sued by her parents, who say the tennis star has taken over the waterfront home the three jointly own.

Sergei and Alla Kournikova filed the suit last week in Miami-Dade Circuit Court. They want the seven-bedroom home "partitioned." *AFP*



GOLD MEDALIST: Celil Ekrem of Turkey lifts 190.0 kilograms in the clean and jerk event in the men's 69 kg class at the 83rd Men's and 17th Women's European Weightlifting Championships in Kiev Thursday. Ekrem won the gold. AFP

STAGE 9 RESULTS

Individual

1. W. Davadilla (Purefoods) 3 hrs 39 mins 32 seconds; 2. A. Primero (Dole) 3. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) 4. S. Benito (Purefoods) 5. J. Millanes (Postmen)

6. D. Marana (Marsman Drysdale) 7. T. Martinez (Beer na Beer) same time

8. B. Ravina (VAT Riders) 0:07 mins behind

9. J. Ricafort (Purefoods) 0:56 mins behind; 10. F. Alagano (Dole) 11. G. Aslado (Patrol 117) 12. G. Bergonio (Samsung)

Overall Team Standings

1. Postmen 111h42'49.268 2. Beer Na Beer 20:48.450 mins behind 3. Dole 23:40.884 mins behind 4. Purefoods 28:49.705 mins behind 5. Samsung 35:22.874 mins behind 6. Mall And More 38:06.418 mins behind 7. Metro Drug 41:16.868 mins behind 8. Vat Riders 47:05.840 mins behind 9. Tanduay Rhum Riders 56:25.917 mins behind 10. PLDT 1:03:08.553 hour behind 11. Marsman Drysdale 1:08:03.280 hour behind 12. Patrol 117 1:13:14.759 hour behind

CdO tennis blasts off

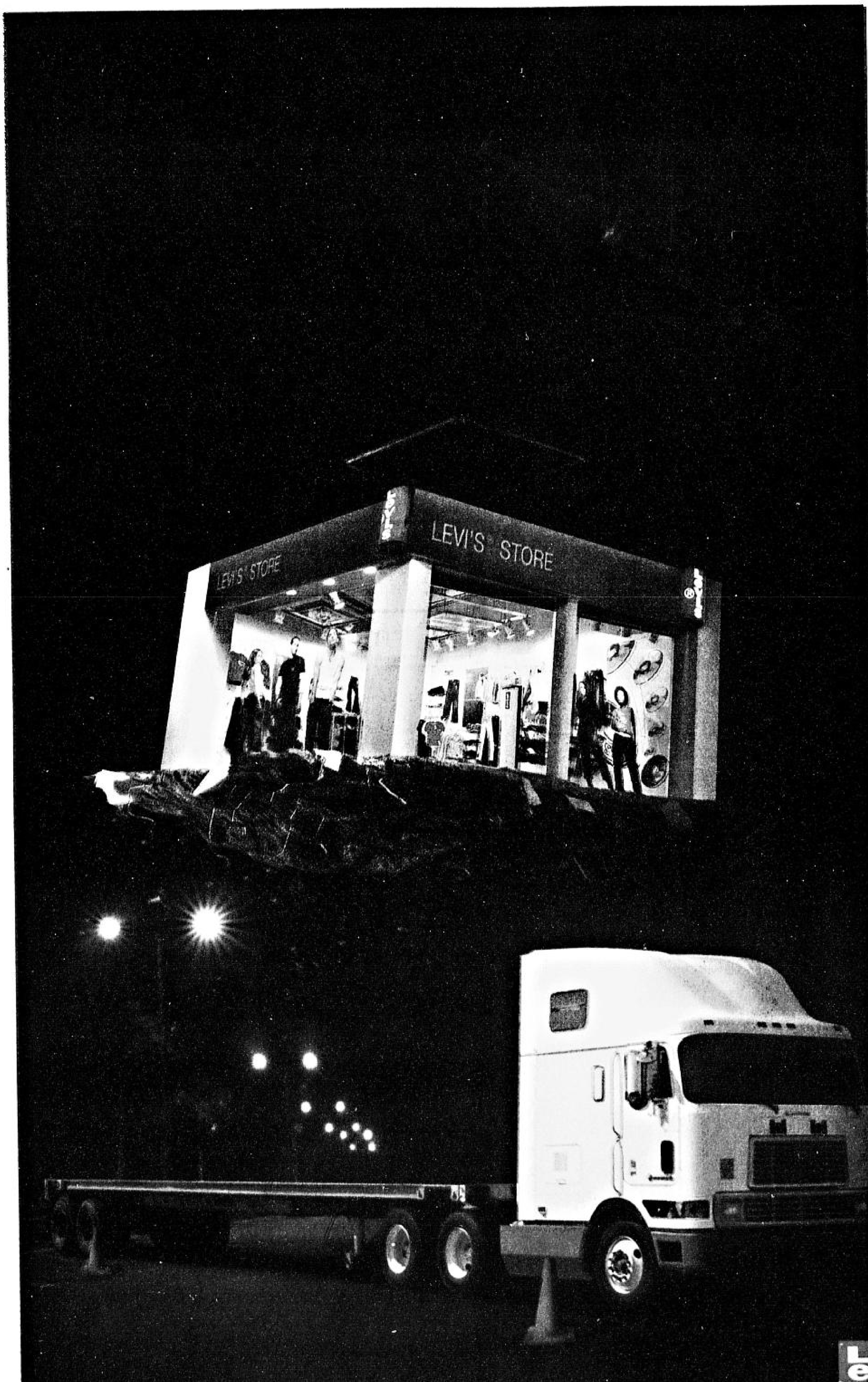
CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The 2nd leg of the Headpenn Junior Tennis Tournament blasts off at 9 a.m. today with at least 105 entries competing in nine divisions at the Nazareth Tennis Courts here.

Up for grabs are titles in the 10 under unisex and the 12, 14, 16, and 18 boys and girls.

Champions will get Head tour bags plus trophies.

Lawyer Tiburcio Palasan, president of the Nazareth Tennis Club, and Philta regional VP Juanito Cansino Jr. will grace the opening ceremonies.

Tournament sponsors are Dynamic Sports, Chris Sports, Toalson, Accel and Nissin Cup Noodles.



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Dandan stuns Basco, gains Philta finals

THIRD SEED Kyle Dandan upset top ranked Michael Basco, 6-4, 6-3, yesterday to barge into the boys' 18-under final in the Philta age-group tournament at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Dandan, a member of the national training pool, arranged a title showdown with second seed Miguel Narvaez, who whipped No. 4 Ralph Kevin Barte, 6-3, 6-2, in the other semifinal.

In the boys' 16-under class, seventh seed Pablo Olivarez eliminated fourth seed El Santo Santos, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, and third seed Russell Arcilla Jr. defeated No. 8 James Murrell, 6-2, 6-3, to join top seed Barte and second seed Daniel Luis Macalino in the semifinals.

Advancing in the boys' 14-under class were top seed Olivarez, second seed El Santo Santos, fifth seed Joshua Tan Ho and No. 8 Julius Lagman.

In the boys' 12-under division, second seed Kim Ivor Saraza downed fourth seed Joseph Baldonado, 6-2, 6-3, to advance to set up a final clash with No. 3 Bernardine Siso, who scored a 6-1, 6-3 victory over seventh seed Alberto Villamor.

In the unisex 10-under category, fifth seed Tim Polero ousted top seed Juan Pocholo Macalino, 6-0, 6-2, to advance to the final against second seed Siso, who beat No. 7 Dheo Talatayod, 6-3, 7-5.

In the girls division, unseeded Melissa Orteza stunned second seed Catherine Flores, 4-6, 7-6, 3-0 (ret.), to forge a final showdown with 18-under top seed Bien Zoleta, a 6-1, 6-2 winner over Nikki Manalo.

Bien's younger sister Bambi, the 16-under top seed, defeated Trudy Amoranto, 6-3, 6-4, to advance to the final against second seed Jessica Agra, who survived Melissa Orteza, 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-2. Agra, seeded No. 1 in the 14-under division, downed fourth seed Zhane Quitara, 7-5, 6-3, to advance against second-ranked Bambi Zoleta, who blasted third seed Sarah Jane Lim, 6-0, 6-0. Top seed Zhane Quitara demolished fourth seed Sally Mae Siso, 6-1, 6-0, to arrange a championship duel with second seed Sarah Jane Lim, a 6-3, 6-3 winner over third seed Joan Opulencia.

Montenegro, Suico fly high in PAF golf

POLICE Senior Supt. Don Montenegro took low-gross honors and Capt. Darwin Suico the low-net plum in the Philippine Air Force Flying School's fourth annual Fellowship Golf Tournament held last Saturday at the Fernando Air Base Golf Club (formerly Grand Makulot) course in Lipa City.

Twenty-six flights competed in the tournament that also lured top Air Force officers including major generals Jose L. Reyes, Cicero Castellano and Claudio Estalilla as well as colonels Oscar Rabena, Efren Daquil, Reu Lucio Samaco, Larry Dela Cruz, Mario Butch Lacson and Jorge De Jesus.

Maj. Gen. Raul L. Perez, commander of the PAF's Air Education and Training Command, and Col. Edgardo Rene C. Samonte, PAF Flying School commandant, organized the tournament.

Marines Maj. Beleran put away the Class A title, with Dante Dizon finishing second.

Maj. Turingan topped Class B, a shot ahead of runner-up Maj. Muceros, while Sgt. Narcisa ruled Class C over Col. Samaco, and Capt. Bella Paiton won Class D over First Lt. Reginald Okko.

Other winners were Chris dela Cruz (longest drive), Beleran (nearest the pin) and Capt. Buboy Saragoza (most exercised).

"I never thought this (golf tournament) would turn out to be a great sucesss," said Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan.

BUSINESS

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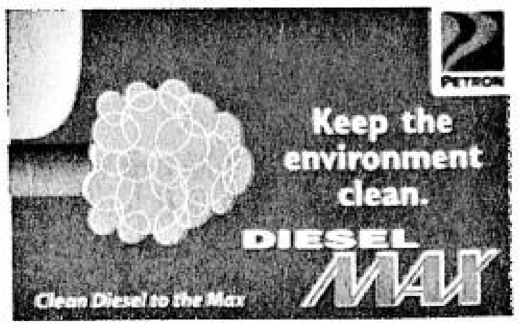

Gov't disputes IMF growth projection

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority has shrugged off the International Monetary Fund's prediction that the Philippine economy would be one of the worst performers in the region this year, saying the country was well on track to meet the 2004 growth target of at least 4.9 percent.

"The IMF has always underestimated the country's performance, and its predictions usually miss the actual growth that the Philippines achieved," Neda Director General Romulo Neri said.

Neri cited the IMF's projection last year that said the Philippines would grow by only 3.8 percent, when the country's economy actually grew by 4.5 percent.

In its latest World Economic Outlook released yesterday, the IMF said the Philippine economy would grow by 4.5 percent this year. Although the figure was an improvement from IMF's earlier growth forecast of 4 percent, it was lower than the outlook given to other major economies in the region.

The 4.5-percent growth projection for the Philippines was even lower than 4.8 percent given to Indonesia. The IMF projected Thailand to grow by 7 percent, and Malaysia by 5.7 percent.

Neri, who is also the country's economic planning secretary, said in an interview that the IMF's outlook for the Philippines should not cause too much worry because economic indicators showed positive signals for the country.

He said the positive performance of the export sector as well as the increase in imports early in the year would boost the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth to at least 4.9 percent.

NERI

Latest data from the National Statistics Office showed that exports grew 7.5 percent in February largely because of higher demand from Asian markets. Neri earlier said the export figure was expected to grow further in the coming months as demand for electronics, the country's major export product, would continue to pick up.

NSO data also showed that imports rose by 6.3 percent in February. Neri said the fact that raw materials for electronics comprised the bulk of the country's imports for the period indicated that the electronics sector was expecting higher sales.

"We are confident of attaining the growth target we set for the year, and so we are not inclined to change that," Neri said.

He added that aside from the electronics industry, other sectors that have so far posted higher production in the first quarter of the year compared with their year-ago performance were agriculture and construction.

INDICATORS

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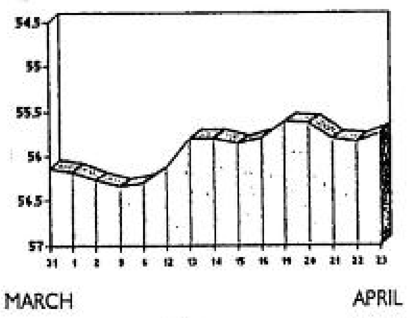


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱55.75 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 23, 2004

¥109.28 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 23, 2004

GOLD: $393.90-394.40

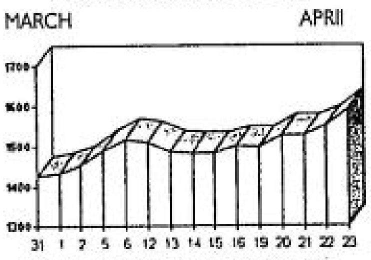
per ounce Hong Kong, April 23, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise

SHARE prices closed up 2.66 percent yesterday at a three-year high supported by Wall Street's upturn overnight, expectations of good first-quarter corporate results and more positive sentiment, dealers said.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Wall Street's advance and the hefty gain in PLDT helped sustain confidence following Monday's decision of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) not to withdraw its investments in the Philippines, they said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 41.12 points to 1,589.40, the day's high and the highest level since March 8, 2001, when the index hit 1,589.57.

Advancers led decliners 40 to 10, with 45 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 248.98 million shares worth P926.4 million after 184.4 million shares worth P572.01 million on Thursday. *AFP*

PNB sustains profitability

PHILIPPINE National Bank posted a net profit of P20 million in the first quarter of the year, lower than the P53-million profit reaped a year ago, but sustained its profitability for the seventh consecutive quarter.

In a statement yesterday, the bank attributed the 62-percent drop in net profit to the impact of rising interest rates, the dilutive but non-recurring effect of tax changes and a shift in the deployment of funds earlier raised from tier-2 or subordinated debt offering.

Nevertheless, PNB said its first-quarter results were better than its own expectations for the period, given the uncertain political environment.

The bank, once the country's biggest in terms of resources,

PNB/ B6

Globe says terrorism hampering expansion

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. said the company's expansion plans were being stalled by security problems after about 20 of its cellular sites in various parts of the country were bombed over the last three years.

Destruction of cell sites had been one of the major concerns of telephone companies, particularly for wireless operators although Globe was reportedly more often victimized compared to its competitors.

Before the advent of mobile phones and the wireless cell sites, bandits attacked power transmission facilities.

The company blamed radical groups or plain extortionists for the bombings.

Globe's senior vice president Rodolfo Salalima said the destruction of the company's facilities, mostly in remote areas, had also bled the Ayala-owned phone firm of funds that could have been channeled to better use.

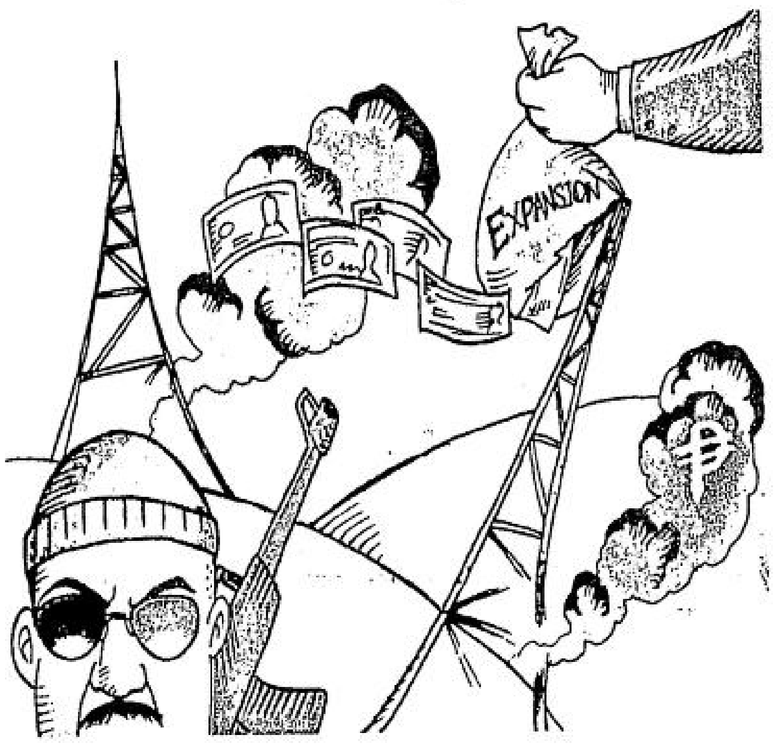
He said that each cellular phone site would cost between P10 million and P15 million to put up.

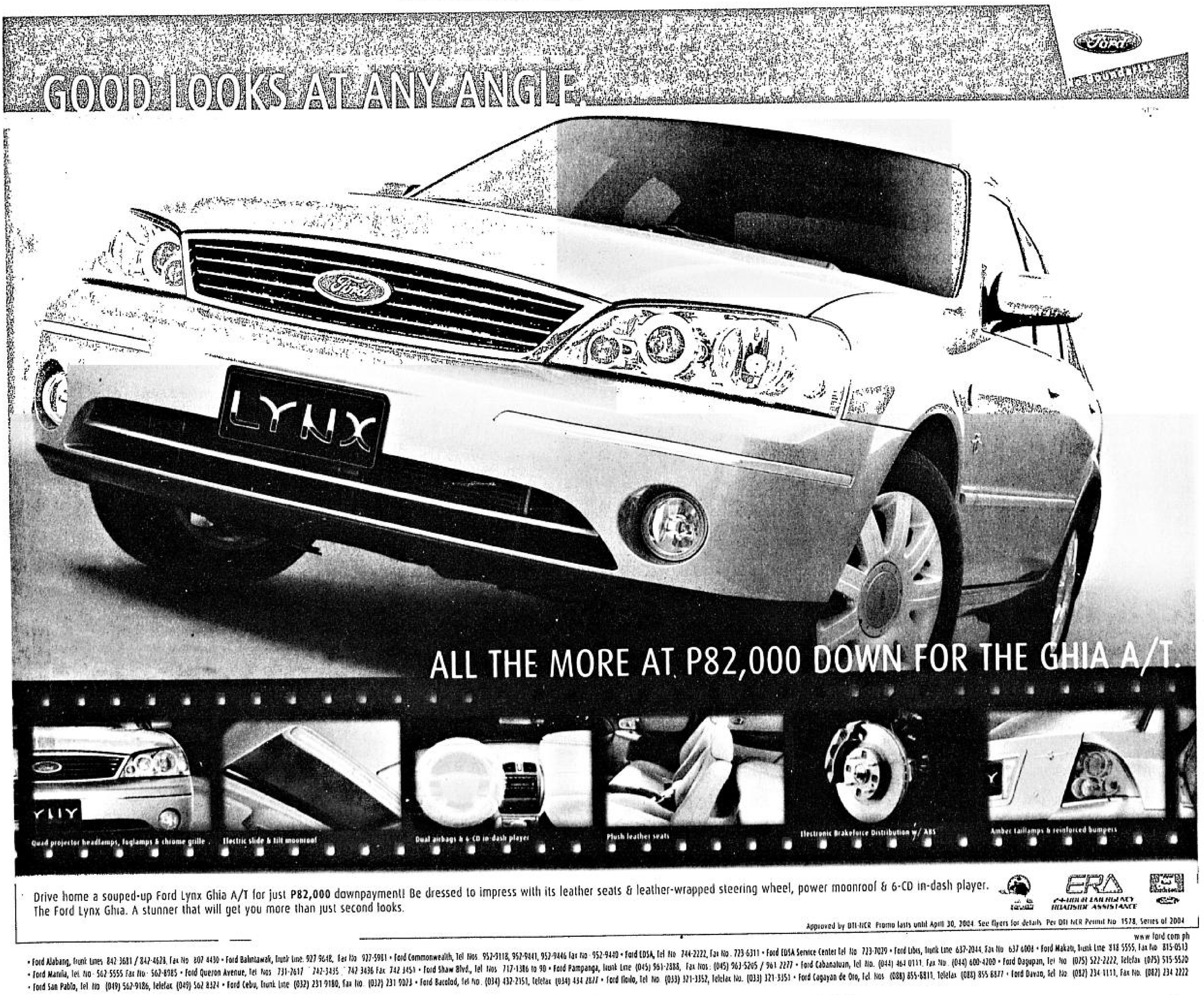
Destruction of about 20 cell sites of Globe entailed investing another P200-P300 million to repair or rebuild the facilities. The Ayala company operates about 3,000 mobile phone sites nationwide to service more than 9 million subscribers.

Salalima said the bombings were perpetrated "by some armed groups with a political agenda or by plain extortionists."

He said the other day that authorities in Mindanao caught a local extortionist linked to a cell

GLOBE/ B6





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Sy group mulls over raising 6.2% interest in San Miguel

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM Prime Holdings Corp. chair Henry Sy Sr. (second from left) met with stockholders during the recent annual meeting. With him are (from left) vice chairman of board, Jose L. Cuisia Jr., corporate secretary Emmanuel C. Paras and Henry Sy Jr. director and executive vice president. ROGER MARGALLO

THE SY Group is not closing its doors to the possibility of increasing its 6.2 percent stake in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. (SMC) but there are no immediate plans as of this time, according to a member of the family.

SM Prime Holdings Inc. executive vice-president Henry Sy Jr. said that "if there was an opportunity" to increase the group's stake, then "why not?"

"No specific plans yet," he added. The Sy group has one board seat in SMC.

He also stressed that the Sy family was not involved in supposed plans by the Presidential Commission on Good Government to change the composition of the SMC board.

"(PCGG chair) Haydee Yorac has answered that very well. If it is a matter of business, Mr. Sy voted for business. They are more after the issue of ownership so there is a difference between PCGG's position and our position," Sy said.

He also clarified that he and his father, mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr. were not approached by representatives of PCGG since they were in China before SMC's stockholder's meeting last Tuesday.

"I don't think anybody was approached because my Dad and I were in China," Sy said.

SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. remained at the helm of SMC early this week after the SMC board unanimously voted to keep him as chair.

"We said we'll try for majority but if we can't, it is fine, as long as business is conducted regularly and beneficial to stockholders," Yorac had said.

The PCGG is represented by five members, namely Menardo Jimenez, Pacifico Fajardo, Edmigio da Silva Jose, Leo Alvez and Octavio Espiritu.

Two board seats are occupied by pension funds Government Service and Insurance System and the Social Security System.

The GSIS and SSS heads sit on the board as independent directors.

Other members of the board are SMC vice chair Ramon Ang, lawyer Estelito Mendoza, Manuel Cojuangco, Inigo Zobel as independent director, Henry Sy Jr. of the prominent SM Group and Kirin representatives Shigeki Ota and Hitoshi Oshima.

GMA keen on railway extension to Sorsogon

SORSOGON CITY—The government is bent on pushing through with the P900-million Daraga, Albay-Matnog, Sorsogon Philippine National Railways line to help boost economic development in Sorsogon province.

President Macapagal-Arroyo announced during the recent Pulong ng Bayan in the provincial gymnasium here that the government, through the Development Bank of the Philippines, already signed an agreement for a build-operate-transfer scheme with China to finance the project.

In an earlier visit in 2001, Ms Macapagal said she wanted the PNR to reach Sorsogon, a project envisioned during the term of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

Earlier, Ms Macapagal announced the start of the rehabilitation and modernization of the PNR's south commuter line (Southrail) this year after getting a $50-million loan from the Korean government.

As part of her provincial sortie here, the President also led the groundbreaking rites of the City Government Complex along the newly-opened diversion road in Barangay Cabid-an in this city.

City Mayor Sally Lee said the project, dubbed as "City within the City," will typify a cityscape that confines the city hall, business and commercial centers, public market and leisure park or recreational area, among others.

The President was accompanied by Sen. Noli de Castro, Sec. Michael Defensor, Gina de Venecia and other Malacañang officials, including presidential adviser for Bicol development, Mario Espinosa. *Emir Emano Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Gov't to prioritize Filipino firms in bidding out infra contracts

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT is all set to implement Executive Order No. 278, which prioritizes Filipino firms in bidding out government construction projects and services.

But foreign lenders, particularly the World Bank, earlier voiced their opposition to the EO, saying that some of its provisions ran contrary to their lending rules.

The committee on infrastructure (Infracom) of the National Economic and Development Authority has approved the implementing rules and regulations of EO No. 278, which addressed the complaints of local construction and consultancy firms.

Filipino constructors and consultants said they were losing big government projects to foreign companies because the previous bidding system appeared to favor large foreign companies.

"To address these issues, EO 278 allows large or multi-disciplinary infrastructure projects to be packaged into separable contract packages or work components, taking into account Filipino capabilities without sacrificing the technical integrity and cost-efficiency of the projects," said Romulo Neri, Neda director general.

He explained that separating projects into several packages would make the cost more affordable for Filipino firms.

Under the IRR, Filipino consultants will also be favored over foreign ones. If the capabilities of the local firms were found to be insufficient to meet the requirement of a project, foreign counterparts would be hired, but Filipinos would be the lead consultants.

The EO was not welcomed by foreign lenders, who normally require their own nationals to be part of the government projects up for bidding. Construction projects funded by an official development assistance from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, for instance, usually call for the limiting of bidding to Japanese constructors.

But Neri earlier said that while the government acknowledged the concerns of foreign lenders, they could not dictate domestic decisions.

"The government intends to increase the participation of local constructors in ODA projects, because payment of these loans are shouldered by the government, anyway," Neri said.

The EO, which was issued in February, would apply to all locally funded infrastructure projects which have not yet been advertised for bidding as of the date of the effectivity of the IRR.

It would also cover all consulting services and infrastructure projects proposed for foreign funding where loan negotiations have not been concluded.

DTI wants special ecozone status for Rapu-Rapu mining project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has urged Malacañang to grant special economic zone status to Australian firm Lafayette Mining Ltd.'s $350-million project in Rapu-Rapu Island.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said in a statement that the move was part of efforts to rekindle foreign investor interest in the country.

Based on DTI data, Lafayette Mining's project in the island off the Pacific coast of the Bicol Peninsula was expected to produce copper, gold, silver and zinc valued at $350 million over the initial six years.

Purisima had said metal exports were expected to increase in 2005 with the start of the Rapu Rapu mining project in the fourth quarter of this year.

He said this was made possible with the approval of a $35-million loan to Lafayette Mining from a consortium of banks that include NM Rothschild & Sons Ltd., ANZ Investment Bank and ABN Amro Bank NV.

Feasibility studies of the Rapu-rapu mineral resource indicate that the mine will yield each year 10,000 tons of copper; 14,000 tons of zinc; 50,000 ounces of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver.

The DTI's endorsement of the Rapu-rapu project for ecozone status came in the wake of the Board of Investment's exclusion of foreign-owned mining projects from investments qualified for incentives.

The BOI move was due to a recently issued Supreme Court decision declaring as unconstitutional certain provisions of the Mining Act of 1995, especially those that pertain to financial and technical assistance agreements with foreign investors.

The decision is under appeal and is not yet final.

According to the specific guidelines of the 2004 Investment Priorities Plan, businesses engaged in the exploration of, mining and processing of minerals must be at least 60-percent Filipino-owned to qualify for BOI incentives.

Such incentives include an income tax holiday; exemption from taxes and duties on imported spare parts for equipment; exemption from wharfage dues and export taxes; tax credits; and additional deductions from taxable income.

Peza, BOC work to ease Cebu tech exports

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINE Economic Zone Authority and the Bureau of Customs yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement with a group of Mactan ecozone locators to facilitate the processing of export documents for electronic products.

During yesterday's signing ceremony, Peza director general Lilia B. de Lima said the two agencies and the Mactan Export Processing Zone Chamber of Exporters and Manufacturers would implement the automated export declaration system (AEDS) to cover electronic exporters based in Cebu and Mactan.

De Lima said the AEDS has met success in Luzon economic zones, where at least 200 electronic and semiconductor firms are covered.

The system is currently limited to semiconductor exporters, which she said accounted for 60-65 percent of the country's export earnings. However, the government plans to expand coverage to other export goods.

Wilhelm Ortaliz, Peza deputy director general, explained that the AEDS reduced the number of documents required for shipment of exports from three or more to only one paper—the single administration document.

"This also means that the time used to process shipments is reduced since the need to check for consistency of data among different documents is removed," Ortaliz said.

He said the direct intervention of Customs and Peza officials were also done away with because the documents were filed electronically and authenticated through bar codes.

"This system also helps exporters do away with inventory expenses since it helps achieve just-in-time shipment," the official said.

Aside from that, Ortaliz said the AEDS would reduce the physical inspection of cargoes through the use of selectivity criteria that identifies which shipments should be examined.

The selectivity criteria is based on the nature of goods in the shipment; the possibility of domestic sale of the goods that may cause diversion of the cargo; the record of performance of the exporting company; and the time it would take the shipment to be moved from the economic zone to the exit point (Ninoy Aquino International Airport).

Earlier this week, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the country would call on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to remove by 2005 tariffs on electronic and semiconductor products traded within the region.

Purisima, who left for Singapore to attend the Asean Economic Ministers Retreat, said the recommendation was part of the draft road map for the electronics industry that he would present to the body.

The government made the call for the integration of the region into a one-market environment, he said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 23, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17.25	16.75	17	66,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46.5	47	45.5	47	835,800
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	100
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	40	41	40	41	72,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	300,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	25	25	148,000
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	15,700
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	8,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24	24	184,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	200	210	200	210	410
Manulife Financial Corp.	2100	2120	2100	2120	610
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	484,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1525	1525	1500	1500	900
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.75	23	23.75	51,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.69	0.67	0.69	2,840,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	910	955	910	955	112,050
Ipeople Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	15,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.041	0.04	0.04	3,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	5,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	50,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	8,903,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1110	1160	1110	1150	211,930
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	82,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	20	20	19.75	20	82,700
Manila Electric Co. B	31	31	30	30	2,113,800
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.25	3.35	7,299,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	65,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	520,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	5,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	100,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28	28	4,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.5	20.5	20	20.25	480,400
RFM Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	59.5	59	59.5	231,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74	74.5	72,700
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	20,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	7,000,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	3.05	2.85	3.05	715,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.58	10,360,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.13	0.145	0.13	0.145	480,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.27	1,020,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.022	0.026	0.022	0.023	2,700,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	30,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	300,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27	27	25	25	6,253,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	400,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	81,000
J.G Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	15,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.5	0.55	0.5	0.52	60,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.16	5,002,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	990,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.165	21,120,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15	15	15	5,800
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.25	0.25	2,810,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	30,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	20,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.04	1.12	1.04	1.12	65,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	430,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.5	24	23.5	24	673,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	5,072,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.16	0.13	0.16	1,750,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.23	0.215	0.225	5,930,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	7,542,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	130,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.25	2,810,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.8	19,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	15,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6	6.2	6	6.1	18,188,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	110,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	250,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	220,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	25,000,000

DISCLOSURES

SANITARY Wares Manufacturing Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 28. Record date is May 6.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Ginebra San Miguel Inc.** were Eduardo M. Cojuanco Jr., Enrique M. Cojuanco, Ramon S. Ang, Arnaldo L. Africa, Carlos Palanca III, Leo S. Alvez, Ma. Belen C. Buensuceso, Roberto N. Huang and Inigo Zobel.

* * *

REPUBLIC Cement Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 16, 3 p.m. at the Manila Peninsula Hotel. Stockholders of record as of May 27 will be entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

* * *

MACONDARY Plastics Inc. scheduled its annual stockholders' meeting on May 26, 10 a.m. at its principal office, Km 13 Agusan National Highway, Barangay Panacan, Davao City. Record date is May 3.

* * *

VICTORIAS Milling Company Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 30, 9 a.m. at the Metropolitan Club Inc., Estrella cor. Amapola Streets, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City. Record date is April 5.

* * *

FIRST Metro Investment Corp.'s president Francisco C. Sebastian has fixed May 6 as the record date to determine the stockholders entitled to cash dividend of P29.17/share. Payment date is May 12.

* * *

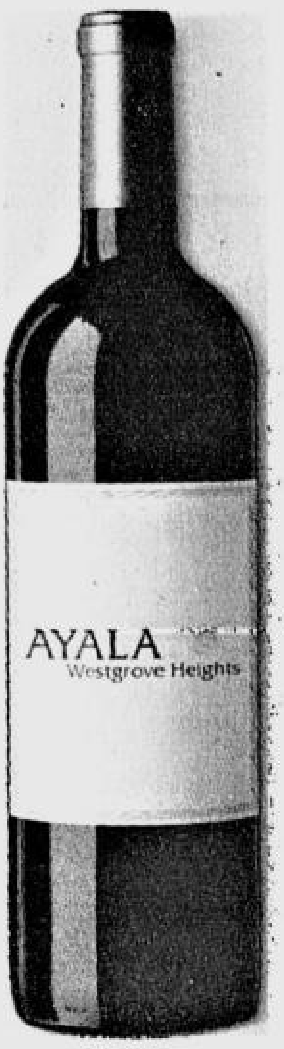
REPUBLIC Cement Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 16, 3 p.m. at the Manila Peninsula Hotel corner Ayala and Makati Ave., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 27 will be entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

* * *

ATLAS Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. postponed its scheduled April 28 annual stockholders' meeting. ***Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

April 23, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.839208	1.000000	55.8350
Japan	Yen	0.007672	0.009142	0.5104
United Kingdom	Pound	1.488671	1.773900	99.0457
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107612	0.128230	7.1597
Switzerland	Franc	0.641989	0.764994	42.7134
Canada	Dollar	0.619662	0.738389	41.2279
Singapore	Dollar	0.494845	0.589657	32.9235
Australia	Dollar	0.612382	0.729714	40.7436
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.226134	2.652661	148.1113
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223789	0.266667	14.8894
Brunei	Dollar	0.493390	0.587924	32.8267
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021171	0.025227	1.4085
UAE	Dirham	0.228493	0.272272	15.2023
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.191600	66.5330
Argentina	Peso	0.292917	0.349040	19.4886
Brazil	Real	0.286713	0.341647	19.0759
Denmark	Kroner	0.134385	0.160133	8.9410
India	Rupee	0.019056	0.022707	1.2678
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220874	0.263193	14.6954
Mexico	New Peso	0.073972	0.088145	4.9216
New Zealand	Dollar	0.523588	0.623908	34.8359
Norway	Kroner	0.121380	0.144636	8.0758
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014641	0.017446	0.9741
South Africa	Rand	0.122467	0.145932	8.1481
Korea	Won	0.000724	0.000863	0.0482
Sweden	Kroner	0.109359	0.130312	7.2760
Syria	Pound	0.016232	0.019342	1.0800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025469	0.030349	1.6945
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000438	0.000522	0.0291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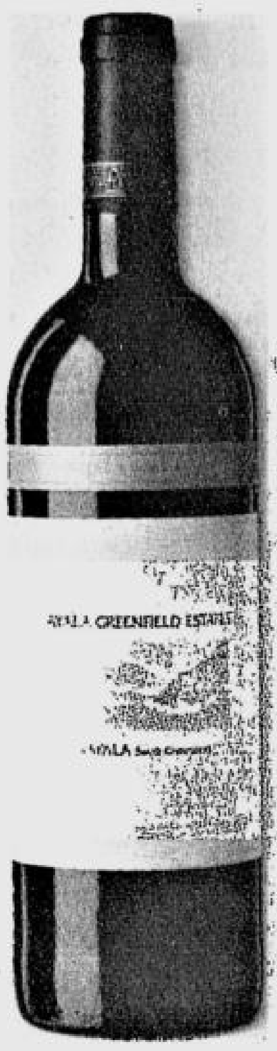
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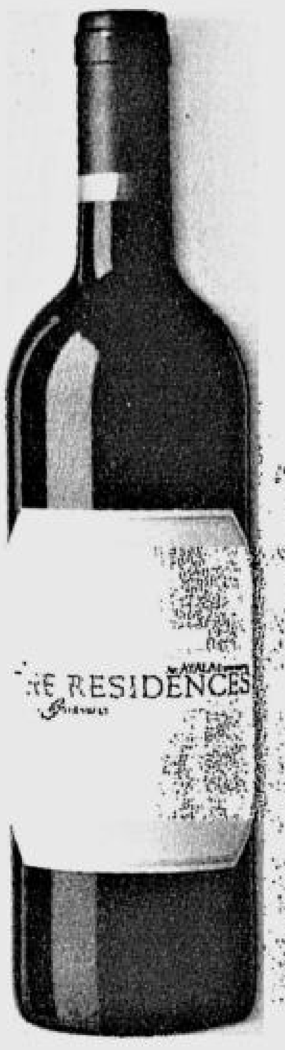
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Lot Area 246sqm
Floor Area 52sqm
Lot 071 Blk 9 Along Barrio Rd., Subic Ibaba.
Minimum Bid Price 269,000.00

ALITAGTAG

LOT 2 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 433sqm
Floor Area 64sqm
Lot 752 Poblacion West
Minimum Bid Price 550,000.00

BALAYAN

LOT 3 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,548sqm
Lot F/ 2231-D Along Barangay Road (Damballelos St.) Brgy. 4
Minimum Bid Price 1,147,000.00

LOT 4 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 817sqm
Floor Area 60sqm
Lot 2, Brgy. Pook
Minimum Bid Price 255,000.00

LOT 5 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,162sqm
Lot 3991-F-9-A Damballelos St Brgy 4
Minimum Bid Price 4,358,000.00

BATANGAS CITY

LOT 6 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 230sqm
Floor Area [illegible]
Lot [illegible]-5 San Isidro
Minimum Bid Price 1,237,000.00
WITHDRAWN

LOT 7 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 591sqm
Floor Area 240sqm
Lots 83 And 84 Along Subd. Rd., Arce Subdivision Kumintang Ibaba
Minimum Bid Price 3,022,000.00

CUENCA

LOT 8 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 11,623sqm
Floor Area 72sqm
Lots L-6120 & L-6121 Sitio Munting Tubig, Ibabao
Minimum Bid Price 804,000.00

CALACA

LOT 9 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 250sqm
Floor Area 80sqm
Lot 13-F-1 Along Brgy. Road, Laguerta Brgy 1 Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 550,000.00

CALATAGAN

LOT 10 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,497.8sqm
Floor Area 176sqm
Lots 47-B & 47-C, Prov'l. Road, Brgy. Lucsuhin
Minimum Bid Price 1,854,000.00

LOT 11 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 457sqm
Floor Area 80sqm
Lot 59 Brgy. Rd., Lucsuhin
Minimum Bid Price 325,000.00

IBAAN

LOT 12 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,493sqm
Floor Area 32sqm
Lots 1724 & 7272 Along Prov'l Rd. Balanga
Minimum Bid Price 440,000.00

LOT 13 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 2,586sqm
Floor Area 127sqm
Lot 1715-A Brgy. Balanga
Minimum Bid Price 504,000.00

LAUREL

LOT 14 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 758sqm
Floor Area 112sqm
Lot 1939 Nat'l Rd. Brgy. Bernayan
Minimum Bid Price 854,000.00

LEMERY

LOT 15 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 85sqm
Floor Area 105sqm
Lot 10113 Atienza St.
Minimum Bid Price 1,584,000.00

LOT 16 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 87sqm
Floor Area 110sqm
Lot 2972 Nat'l Rd. Matingain II.
Minimum Bid Price 529,000.00

LOT 17 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 100sqm
Floor Area 120sqm
Lot 1-E, Valenzuela St. Wawa
Minimum Bid Price 603,000.00

LOT 18 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 2,199.6sqm
Floor Area 63sqm
Lot 71, Along Barrio Rd. Ayao-Iyao
Minimum Bid Price 634,000.00

LOT 19 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 55sqm
Floor Area 82sqm
Lot 6-B-1, Villamin St.
Minimum Bid Price 656,000.00

LOT 20 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 227sqm
Floor Area 100sqm
Lot 4330, Nat'l Rd, Brgy. Dayapan
Minimum Bid Price 678,000.00

LOT 21 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 287sqm
Floor Area 150sqm
Lot 6302, Nat'l Rd., Malinggain I
Minimum Bid Price 843,000.00

LOT 22 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,400sqm
Floor Area 75sqm
Nat'l Rd., Brgy. Dayapan
Minimum Bid Price 982,000.00

LIAN

LOT 23 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 393sqm
Lot 21, Cudinat St., Binubusan
Minimum Bid Price 337,000.00

MALVAR

LOT 24 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 3,116sqm
Lot L-1660 Interior Brgy., San Pedro, East
Minimum Bid Price 186,000.00

LOT 25 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 330sqm
Floor Area 84sqm
Lot 1641-B Prov'l. Rd. Brgy. San Pedro 1, East
Minimum Bid Price 468,000.00

LOT 26 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,188sqm
Floor Area 149sqm
Lot 4124 J.P. Laurel Nat'l Highway, Brgy. Santiago
Minimum Bid Price 1,213,000.00

LOT 27 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 306sqm
Lot Nos. 3881 & 3880 Brgy. San Andres
Minimum Bid Price 143,000.00

LOT 28 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 578sqm
Lot 2134 Along Brgy. Rd., San Gregorio
Minimum Bid Price 147,000.00

LOT 29 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 1,897sqm
Lot 2511, interior Brgy. San Isidro West
Minimum Bid Price 214,000.00

LOT 30 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,621sqm
Lot 1750, Brgy. San Pedro West
Minimum Bid Price 492,000.00

LOT 31 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,128sqm
Floor Area 207sqm
L-1546, Int. Brgy. San Pedro West
Minimum Bid Price 872,000.00

NASUGBU

LOT 32 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 445sqm
Lot 3 Blk 14, Olwa Subd.
Minimum Bid Price 379,000.00

LOT 33 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 309.5sqm
Floor Area 111sqm
Lot 1031-B P. Rinoza St.
Minimum Bid Price 986,000.00

PADRE GARCIA

LOT 34 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 8,096sqm
Lot A Brgy. Banaba
Minimum Bid Price 1,239,000.00

LOT 35 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 7,088sqm
Lot 1123 Brgy. Banaba
Minimum Bid Price 1,326,000.00

LOT 36 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 230sqm
Lot 855-C-2 Along Subd. Rd., Brgy. Bawi
Minimum Bid Price 137,000.00

LOT 37 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 373sqm
Lot 855-C-1 cor Subd. Rd. & Prov'l Rd., Brgy. Bawi,
Minimum Bid Price 222,000.00

LOT 38 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,499sqm
Lot 873 Brgy. Bawi
Minimum Bid Price 375,000.00

ROSARIO

LOT 39 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 302sqm
Floor Area 204sqm
Lot 70-A Magitbay St. Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 1,100,000.00

LOT 40 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 984sqm
Lot 5507 Prov'l Rd. Brgy. Alupay
Minimum Bid Price 178,000.00

LOT 41 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 806sqm
Lot 7714 interior, Brgy. Sta. Cruz
Minimum Bid Price 36,000.00

LOT 42 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 3,814sqm
Lot L-6385 Prov'l Rd. Brgy. Baybayin
Minimum Bid Price 830,000.00

SAN JOSE

LOT 43 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 647sqm
Floor Area 140sqm
Lot 7506 Along Brgy. Rd., Bigain II
Minimum Bid Price 210,000.00

LOT 44 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 9,491sqm
Lot 8291 Balagtasin II
Minimum Bid Price 484,000.00

LOT 45 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 6,091sqm
Floor Area 82sqm
Lot 8728 Along Brgy Rd., Balagtasin II
Minimum Bid Price 754,000.00

SAN JUAN

LOT 46 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 811sqm
Lot 5091 Along Brgy Road, Brgy. Putingbuhangin
Minimum Bid Price: 104,000.00

LOT 47 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 350sqm
Lot 3586, Sampiro
Minimum Bid Price 11,000.00

LOT 48 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 967sqm
Floor Area 44sqm
Lot 1, Brgy Road, Brgy. Buhay na Sapa
Minimum Bid Price: 187,000.00

LOT 49 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 591sqm
Floor Area 74sqm
Lot 5255 018 Sec. 07 Along Brgy. Balagbag
Minimum Bid Price: 193,000.00

LOT 50 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 13,365sqm
Lot 6539 Interior Brgy., Sampiro
Minimum Bid Price 201,000.00

LOT 51 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 668sqm
Floor Area 58sqm
Lot 159 pt/13 sec 35, Interior Marasigan St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 369,000.00

LOT 52 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 445sqm
Lot 156 Blk 3 Marasigan St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 635,000.00

SAN LUIS

LOT 53 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,973sqm
Floor Area 52sqm
Lot 4673, Balagtasin
Minimum Bid Price 495,000.00

LOT 54 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 2,468sqm
Floor Area 103sqm
Along Barrio Road Brgy. Talon
Minimum Bid Price 675,000.00

STA. TERESITA

LOT 55 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 2,075sqm
Floor Area 209sqm
Lot 1668, Brgy. Calayaan
Minimum Bid Price 1,205,000.00

LOT 56 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 337sqm
Floor Area 55sqm
Lot 522, Along Barrio Rd. Poblacion III
Minimum Bid Price 438,000.00

LOT 57 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 387sqm
Floor Area 95sqm
Lot 1694-B Brgy. Calayaan
Minimum Bid Price 528,000.00

LOT 58 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 206sqm
Floor Area 84sqm
Lot 1879 National Road, Bo. Antipolo
Minimum Bid Price 578,000.00

STO. TOMAS

LOT 59 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 5,391sqm
Floor Area 76sqm
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Minimum Bid Price 584,000.00

LOT 60 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 2,006sqm
Lot 5094, Brgy San Juan
Minimum Bid Price 903,000.00

TAAL

LOT 61 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 3,320sqm
Floor Area 110sqm
Lot 2009, Along Barrio Rd., Tulo
Minimum Bid Price 1,467,000.00

LOT 62 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 168sqm
Floor Area 85sqm
Lot 5285, Buli
Minimum Bid Price 377,000.00

LOT 63 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 678sqm
Floor Area 62sqm
Lot 2269, Along Brgy. Rd., Tulo
Minimum Bid Price 630,000.00

LOT 64 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 89sqm
Floor Area 144sqm
Lot 3380, Provincial Road, Brgy Seiran
Minimum Bid Price 661,000.00

LOT 65 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 707sqm
Floor Area: 121sqm
Lot 2268, Along Brgy Rd. Tulo
Minimum Bid Price 913,000.00

TALISAY

LOT 66 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 994sqm
Floor Area 32sqm
Lot 335 Brgy. Tranca
Minimum Bid Price 204,000.00

LOT 67 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 335sqm
Floor Area 45sqm
C.M. Recto St.,
Minimum Bid Price 423,000.00

LOT 68 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 317sqm
Floor Area 40sqm
C.M. Recto St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price 446,000.00

LOT 69 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 836sqm
Floor Area various
Along Prov'l Rd., Brgy. Sampaloc
Minimum Bid Price 556,000.00

TANAUAN

LOT 70 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 6,754sqm
Lot L-10194 Prov'l Rd., Brgy. Talaga
Minimum Bid Price 1,520,000.00

LOT 71 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 558sqm
Floor Area 65sqm
Lot 10787-A-1, Brgy. Janopol Sur,
Minimum Bid Price 136,000.00

LOT 72 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 503sqm
Floor Area 194sqm
Lot 1492-C, Brgy. Rd., Banjo East
Minimum Bid Price 531,000.00

LOT 73 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 142sqm
Lot 881-A Brgy. Bagumbayan
Minimum Bid Price 75,000.00

LOT 74 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,250sqm
Floor Area 144sqm
Lot 5, Brgy Rd., Banjo East
Minimum Bid Price 772,000.00

LOT 75 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 1,906sqm
Floor Area 134sqm
Lot 3296, Brgy. Rd. Brgy Sambat
Minimum Bid Price 774,000.00

LOT 76 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 295sqm
Floor Area 45sqm
Lot 6732-C, Interior Brgy. Sulpok
Minimum Bid Price 78,000.00

LOT 77 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area 4,183sqm
Lot 1598-C, Brgy. Rd., Banjo West
Minimum Bid Price 879,000.00

LOT 78 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 270sqm
Floor Area 200sqm
Lot 7 Blk 3, Mahgaya Cmpd. Sambat
Minimum Bid Price 977,000.00

LOT 79 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area 960sqm
Floor Area 126sqm
Lot 2614-A, Brgy Rd. Tinurik
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People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Are your breasts healthy?

THE WOMAN'S body has been manipulated throughout time. Women not only in the entertainment industry are pressured to "measure up" to a stereotyped body image. Take the case of the breast. It is the first victim of this "psychological disturbance" among many women. It undergoes breast augmentation, enhancement, a lift, etc., to achieve that desirable form.

But we must realize that the most psychologically disturbing experience anyone can have is discovering a lump in her breast. Cysts (fluid lumps) or masses (solid lump), technically called tumors, are abnormal growth hence can alter the size and shape of the breast leading to potential distortion and even deterioration of body image. A woman who finds out that she has a lump in the breast will probably suspect cancer. A visit to the doctor to confirm what the lump is all about should be done immediately so that early treatment could be administered.

Since every woman's breast change several times even in a month's time following the menstrual cycle, frequent visits are not really necessary! A woman can do breast self examination (BSE). But first, she should know what is her "normal breast" and how her breasts "normally feel" so she can easily identify changes during BSE. Any change that is seen and felt is identified and compared to the other breast.

How to do the BSE:

1. Stand or sit in front of the mirror for visual inspection. Raise the hand and place behind the head. Look for dimples, discharges, folds, lumps, thickening, size and shape changes, and swelling. Check also the underarm for any lump.

2. Next, examine the breast using the second and third fingers of the opposite hand. Start the finger-walk around the perimeter of the nipple, moving about an inch away each time you complete the perimeter creating a bigger spiral until the outermost edge of the breast is covered.

3. Continue up towards and under the armpit. If your breast is large relative to the "average" allow the fingers pads to apply heavier pressure to better evaluate underlying breast tissue.

4. Repeat the visual scan and finger walk at the other breast.

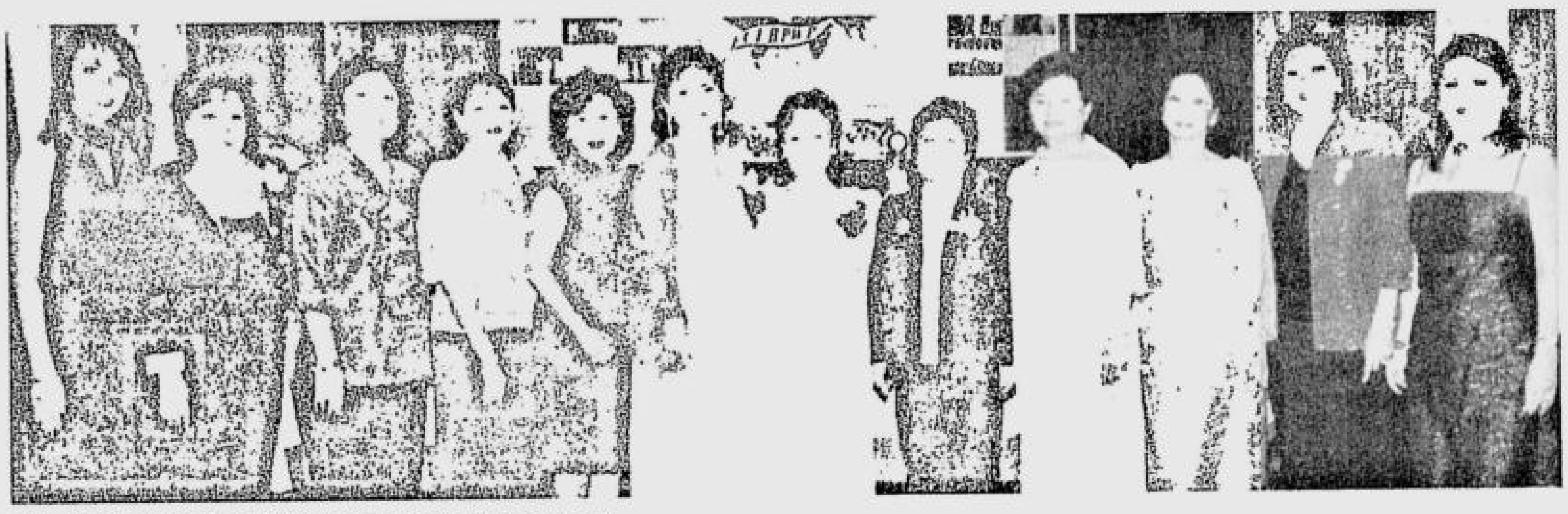
5. Finger walk at the breasts should be repeated when lying down.

Early breast cancer is painless, non-tender when pressed, movable and feels like a mongo seed or a marble upon hand palpation. The mass is movable at early stage then becoming non-movable at late stage, with irregular borders. Other late stage signs are nipple discharge, nipple inversion dimpling and or swelling of breast skin, and or armpit mass.

Who should perform BSE?

Both men and women. Yes. Men too can be diagnosed with breast cancer. Although less frequent, none the less, breast cancer can happen in men and behave more aggressively so. BSE should start at age 20 years and should be performed 7 days after monthly menstruation or for those not menstruating on the same day each month. Remember to immediately get a medical opinion on any change that you may detect during your regular BSE. There are effective treatments for breast tumors nowadays-cancer or not - from simple surgery (e.g. excision biopsy) to HER-2 neu / erb-2 neu testing to monoclonal antibodies (e.g. trastuzumab). Your breasts depend on you.

THREE MEN AND A LADY
Interior designer Alice Erfe is assisted by architect Willie Coscolluela, Rockwell Land Corp chair Manolo Lopez and president/CEO Nestor Padilla during the recently held Joya at Rockwell Model Unit blessing and ribbon cutting at Power Plant Mall.



FIL-CHI CELEBRATES 5TH ANNIVERSARY
The Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business and Professional Women of the Philippines (FCFBPWP) is an organization composed of dynamic and civic-minded business and professional women working together to meet the challenges of the new millennium through their combined abilities and strengths. Now on its 5th year, it celebrated its 5th anniversary last March 26 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Shown are (from left): Nancy Lim, Amy Wong, Lily Lim Chua, Betty Dante Aw, Diana Franco, Fil-Chi president Myrna Yao, Most Outstanding Woman in Business awardee lawyer Elena Lim, Outstanding Women in Government awardee Sec. Corazon 'Dinky' Soliman, Rosalind Wee, Tessie Yapson, Nellie King and Rosario Lim.

Bits Clips

'The Man of La Mancha'

SHOPPERS at The Podiumwill have a rare chance to watch the staging of 'The Man of La Mancha', today at 4 p.m. The musicale, which is based on Miguel Cervantes' classic novel 'Don Quixote', will be performed by Cue Productions, a group of talented high school students from exclusive schools - La Salle Grenhills, St. Paul's College, Poveda Learnin Center, and the Assumption College. The Man of La Mancha at The Podium is made possible by Wave 89.1, Jam 88.3 and China Star.

GameChannel now on ABC-5

COME April 26, GameChannel, Asia's first fully-interactive mobile-to-TV arcade game, moves to its new home, ABC-5, with the launching of a more exciting and entertaining GameChannel Extreme (GCX). GCX is created and produced by Wireless Services Asia (WSA). GCX will now be shown on ABC-5 from 4 to 4:30 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

'Beyond Black' launched

TECHNOLOGY and coffee enthusiasts rejoiced under the velvety summer evening during the exhilarating Beyond Black outdoor party in Greenbelt 3, launched recently by Sony Ericsson. Beyond Black promo is now ongoing in 20 cities and 100 coffee chains nationwide, from Davao to Baguio with 12 other major participants. Everyone is welcome to a series of Sony Ericsson weekend activities on April 30, May 1, 14, 15, 28, 29 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at selected outlets of Figaro, Seattle's best, Cordillera Coffee, Coffee Beanery, McCafe, Bo's Coffee, Gourmet's Cafe, Mocha Blends and Gloria Jeans around the metro.

AHS Alumni Grand Reunion

THE ARELLANO High School will be holding its grand reunion on April 30, at 6 p.m. at the Pandanggo Fiesta Pavillion of the Manila Hotel. Exciting prizes will be raffled off. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza will be the guest of honor. For particulars and ticket reservations, contact: Bonnie del Rosario '50 - 927-1569; Taling Javier '48 - 419-7330; Veronica Ramos '81 - 749-2239; Ric Ortiz '52 - 373-3138; Norma Torres Garcia ' 68 - 253-0620; Rolando Perez '57 - 525-1527.

Hot Wheels World Race

RICHWELL Trading Corp, exclusive distributor of Hot Wheels, recently held the semi finals of the Hot Wheels World Race at Toy Kingdom SM Megamall last April 17. Kids and kids-at-heart took the challenge of getting the shortest elapsed time as they raced their Hot Wheels through the twist and turns of the race track. Watch for the grand finals on May 2, at Toy Kingdom Megamall, which will feature an exclusive Hot Wheels movie premiere, and will be graced by Starstruck celebrity guest Mark Heras.

5th Titap Sime Tyres Golf Cup

THE 5TH Tire Importers and Traders Association of the Philippines (Titap) Sime Tyres Golf Cup is slated on May 4, at the Royal Northwoods Golf Club Inc, in Coral na Bato, San Rafael, Bulacan. The Titap Cup hopes to strengthen ties among its general membership, associates, friends and industry partners. Fabulous prizes and premium tour souvenirs await the participants. This tournament is sponsored by Sime Tyres of Malaysia, now a Continental Tire company in Germany, through its Philippine distributor, Orchid Trading Inc Tee-off is from 6:30 a m to 9:30 a m

VERDANT HEIGHTS SITE BRIEFING
Victor Manarang (4th from right), president of One Asia Development Corp, briefs investors and guests during the recent launching of Verdant Heights, a P300 million housing project offering 216 units located at the Multinational Village in Parañaque City. With him are (from left) Ronald del Rosario, Assunta Gonzales, Leah Garcia, Marisol Ybanez, Irene Chan, Sonny Justiniano, Evelyn Solis and Edgar Llanes.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

REQUESTS FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee – Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP, G-EPS registered companies/contractors and other interested suppliers to a public bidding for:

One (1) lot Supply of the Consulting Services, Software and Incremental Hardware to Implement Phase I of the Data Warehousing Project per BSP Request for Proposal

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is P112.0 million (maximum).

Target Completion Date: Within twelve (12) months after the award of contract.

Interested bidders must submit the following documents to the Bids and Awards Committee, Room 212, 2nd Floor, Five-Storey Building corner A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila, not later than 11 May 2004 5:20 a.m., Philippine Time.

1. A brief company history/profile (limited to 5 A4 pages);
2. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers;
3. Y2002 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement and Balance Sheet) which shows an annual income of at least USD5 Million, a working capital of USD500,000.00 and networth of USD2.0 Million);
4. Prospective bidder's computation of Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contract/P.O.s, or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = ([Current Asset less Current Liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects, K=10;
5. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation;
6. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check;
7. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original;
8. Reference sites/successful installations with at least three (3) completed projects of similar functionality to BSP and use of the software product proposed for the BSP solution. For each reference site, the following details should be provided (limited to two (A4 pages), and
   a. Name of the organization;
   b. Name of the appropriate referee contact;
   c. Current telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of the referee contact;
   d. Role(s) undertaken by the bidder at the reference site;
   e. Nature of the business conducted at the reference site; and
   f. Hardware and software solution implemented

Nominated reference sites should be contacted prior to lodging responses to ensure that they

a. Are willing to provide a reference to BSP if asked to do so
b. Understand that during the evaluation period they may be contacted directly by BSP evaluation staff.

The BSP centralized data warehouse is envisioned to facilitate its reporting and analytical processes. The strategy of implementation is modular. Phase I involves the implementation of the integrated solution to facilitate the conversion of the supevisory and external reporting requirements of the BSP Supervision and Examination Sector. While Phase I should serve as a solid foundation for a bank-wide data warehouse in the future, it is to be treated as a self-contained project. The supplier of Phase I will have no preferential right to be the supplier of other phases

The Request for Proposal (RFP) and other pre-bidding documents may be purchased by pre-qualified suppliers for a non-refundable fee of P50,000.00 and upon signing of a Confidentiality Agreement. Pre-qualified suppliers should submit an initial but complete technical proposal to the BAC through the Data Warehouse (DW) Project Executive Steering Committee and should be prepared to make a presentation of their proposed solutions, if required. The DW Project Executive Steering Committee's review of the submitted technical proposals may lead to a revised RFP. Bonus technical points may be awarded for creative technical proposals that lead to improvement of the RFP.

The BAC shall issue Invitation(s) to Bid (ITB) to responding pre-qualified bidders. In response to the ITB, suppliers should submit a final technical proposal based on the revised RFP and a financial bid. The winner shall be selected on the basis of a weighted overall score for best combination of technical quality and financial bid. The BSP assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate and indemnify the bidders for expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their proposals. While bids by Joint Venture are acceptable, the BSP intends to contact with a single entity. Bidders as the prime contractors shall take full responsibility for all sub-contracted services and must, in their bid, include sufficient and relevant information on joint-venture partners

(Sgd.) MA. DOLORES B. YUVIENCO
Chairman

(PDI–April 24, 2004)

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SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
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E-mail: *sssemail@info.com.ph* • Website *http://www.sss.gov.ph*

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

	NAME OF BENEFICIARIES	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBER	DATE OF DEMISE
1)	Isabelita P. Abaya	24 F. Carlos, Baesa, Quezon City	Felino L. Abaya SS# 03-2883417-8	November 6, 2003
2)	Nenita, Roda Agamao Licuanan	South Poblacion (Sur), Bucay, Abra	Danilo C. Agamao SS# 03-3260634-7	November 27, 2003
3)	Luzviminda Tiozol Gloria Amago	Unknown	Domingo Amago SS# 03-5158444-0	January 7, 1998
4)	Freddie, Alan & Teddy Anonuevo	23-H Baesa Road, Quezon City	Nestor Anonuevo SS# 03-6326999-9	December 9, 2003
5)	Marilyn Paracueles Jumare	Mabulac Bagonbon San Carlos City, Neg. Occ.	Jonathan Apurado SS# 07-1517006-3	July 25, 2002
6)	Winefreda Alabat	Los Angeles, Butuan City	Ildefonso Ardines SS# 06-0769394-6	March 28, 1998
7)	Julieta Arevalo	Davao City	Melder Arevalo SS# 09-0174105-7	April 4, 2004
8)	Nenita Dosal Ma. Nanette D. Balein Arnold D. Balein Santiago Balein, Jr.	Taft, Eastern Samar	Santiago M. Balein SS# 03-0982931-9	November 28, 2003
9)	Tersita Del Mundo	Unknown	Policarpio A. Basea SS# 03-3280618-9	November 13, 2002
10)	Teresita Palana	Unknown	Sitjar P. Baz SS# 03-2407910-2	November 29, 2003
11)	Eugenia Poblico Glenda Carmona	Lagangohan, Panabo, Davao del Norte	Rosalindo M. Carmona SS# 09-1057705-0	May 26, 2003
12)	Alberto Cunanan	Brgy. Aya, Talisay, Quezon	Manuel Cunanan SS# 33-4166743-9	September 9, 2002
13)	Marilyn David	101 P. Castillo St., Caloocan City	Mario G. David SS# 03-1563580-1	January 8, 2004
14)	Flordelisa Casimiro	1000 Int. 16 Gerardo, Sampaloc, Manila	Ernesto Dizon SS# 03-1029683-4	October 13, 2003
15)	Felicitas Egama	80 Kaingin, Balintawak, QC	Roque Egama SS# 03-1299897-8	June 16, 2003
16)	Rosalinda Ureta Enterina Emelita Enterina	Manila	Ricardo C. Enterina SS# 09-0261503-0	September 9, 2003
17)	Joselito Galedo	8 Udo St., Tumana, Concepcion, Marikina City	Bryan Galedo SS# 33-7074886-6	February 14, 2004
18)	Anecita Geamala	Cabug-cabug, Pres. Roxas, Capiz	Ceazar Geamala SS# 07-0397033-0	December 8, 2003
19)	Lany Genovata	Bo. Sarmiento, Parang, Maguindanao	Rosendo Genovata SS# 09-0272564-5	May 5, 2002
20)	Emerita Guadalquiver	General Santos City	Nila. T. Guadalquiver SS# 09-2204036-8	March 5, 2004
21)	Godofredo Hibanada	San Isidro, General Santos City	Eusebio Hibanada SS# 09-1145533-3	May 25, 1993
22)	Teresita Bulalayao	1-Q JP Rizal, Proj. 4, Quezon City	German Jasmin SS# 03-2766296-9	January 15, 2004
23)	Erlinda Llorca	Calmon, Ormoc City	Paquito Llorca SS# 06-0725171-5	February 14, 2004
24)	Yolanda Martos, Reynante & Maryjane	Ilauran, Romblon, Romblon	Ernesto M. Martos SS# 03-4007194-8	January 18, 2004
25)	Erlinda Baldago	Jose Abad Santos St., Tanay, Rizal	Gil Malaverde SS# 03-2588661-1	February 20, 2004
26)	Efren Montero	Unknown	Bienvenido Montero SS# 07-0164414-7	June 22, 2001
27)	John Russel Yvette Pamoceno	Poblacion Sur, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan	Rodrigo Pamoceno SS# 03-1635047-3	February 17, 2004
28)	Diamond Romero	Phase IV Milagrosa, Carmona, Cavite	Bernard E. Romero SS# 33-5620550-1	October 1, 2003
29)	Felita Campos Tayo	Lakandula St., Parang, Marikina City	Alfeo Tayo SS# 03-1190494-7	January 26, 2004
30)	Agripina S. Vallaester Rufina Arondina/Rondena	Sagay City, Neg. Occ.	Fausto M. Villaester SS#07-0180568-5	May 19, 2003

– Nothing follows –

(PDI – April 24, 2004)

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education through the Health and Nutrition Center (HNC) is inviting suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET	DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE OF SUBMISSION & OPENING OF BID
Supply and Delivery of Powdered Full Cream Milk	P22,824,000.00	May 7, 2004 10.00 AM	May 21, 2004, 10.00 AM
Supply and Delivery of Fortified Instant Noodles	P 6,099,000.00	May 7, 2004 2.00 PM	May 21, 2004 2.00 PM
Supply and Delivery of Fortified Biscuits	P 2,320,271.00		
Supply and Delivery of Albendazole Tablets	P 5,900,000.00		
Printing and Delivery of Growth Tables and Charts	P 1,500,000.00		

All interested suppliers may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent specifying the item/s you wish to bid and upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) starting **April 26 – May 14, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at http://www.deped.gov.ph.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI – April 24 & May 1, 2004)

Market-favored president seen to boost peso to 54:$1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO can bounce back to 54 to $1 over the next nine months if the Philippines elects a president who is favored by the markets, but otherwise, the currency may slide to a record-low of 57 against the US dollar, according to the regional economist of Standard Chartered Bank.

In an economic briefing Thursday night, SCB's Mike Moran said overall, the peso would still likely lag behind the uptrend among Asian currencies due to investor concerns about the country's rising debts.

"In relation to the rest of Asia, the perceived risk to the Philippines is still greater," Moran said. "One thing you can be sure of is that the peso will continue to be volatile."

Moran said it would probably take some time before the market could be convinced that the country's debt issue would be resolved.

"Structural debt issues will remain the focal point. Confidence cannot afford any slips, policy must be prudent," he said.

Based on the behavior of the currency during the run-up to the May 12 elections in the past, Moran said there was a pattern as to which candidate was favorable to the market.

The currency always depreciated in the past when opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. appeared to be headed for the presidency.

Based on the latest opinion polls, however, President Macapagal-Arroyo widened her lead over the popular movie actor, apparently benefiting from shifting of votes from another candidate, Raul Roco, who admitted being stricken with cancer and left the campaign for treatment in the United States.

While Moran stressed he was not endorsing the election of the incumbent, he said the markets would welcome a continuation of current economic policies.

However, he noted that the reelection itself was not a guarantee that the fiscal prudence currently observed would be sustained.

While the country was nowhere near Argentina as far as debt default risks were concerned, he said a 4-5 percent growth in the domestic economy would have to be attained over the next five years to ensure fiscal sustainability.

So far, he said there were some positive signs. For instance, he said the country's payment of principal debt as a ratio of revenues had overtaken the ratio to interest payments.

Citing the bank's central projection, Moran said the local currency would likely depreciate to 56.20 at the end of the second quarter and stay on the 56:$1 levels until the first quarter of 2005.

MIRANT Philippines, the country's largest energy producer, is funding another renewable energy systems worth P17 million to energize about 42 more barangays in Mindanao. Under the Alliance for Mindanao Off-grid Renewable Energy (AMORE) program of the United States Agency for International Development and Winrock International, the fund will be used to install photovoltaic solar home systems in about 1,300 households and 42 community centers, as well as 84 solar-powered streetlights in Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Zamboanga, Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato. AMORE is slated to energize 24 additional barangays later this year, again with Mirant funding.

PNB sustains . . .

From page B1

said it expected to gain momentum in the third and fourth quarters of this year.

Net operating income in the first quarter dropped to P138 million from P228 million while net interest income rose by 9 percent to P454 million from a year ago.

Interest expenses likewise inched up to P1.4 billion from P1.37 billion a year ago.

"The lag in the actual placement of (tier-2) funds, however, allowed the bank to access higher yields on its investments, the benefits of which have begun to be recognized in the second quarter," PNB said.

The bank said restructuring activities also helped reduce its nonperforming loan ratio to 44.9 percent of total loans as of end-March from 46.7 percent at end-2003.

"For the rest of 2004, PNB is committed to remain focused on further advancing its gains and accelerating growth of its core businesses. Emphasis will be given to the retail and SME (small- and medium-sized enterprises) markets," the bank said, adding that it was looking to further improve its market position this year.

PNB's total resources amounted to P214 billion as of end-March, 8 percent higher than the P199 billion at end-2003.

The bank plans to unload P20 billion of its bad assets to a special purpose asset vehicle (SPV) before the deadline to qualify for tax relief and other perks expires this September. It has tapped auditing firm Ernst & Young to help sell these assets.

The P20 billion worth of assets which PNB plans to sell through an SPV consisted of 1,000 nonperforming loan accounts and 7,000 pieces of real and other properties owned and acquired (ropoas). *Doris C. Dumlao*

Globe says . . .

From page B1

site bombing who pretended to be a member of a separatist group.

Salalima added that Globe also received information that a group of extortionists also operates in Central Luzon.

"We consider it a major problem in the sense that we are in public service and the moment there is a bombing, our operations are disrupted and we have to spend time and money to repair it," the Globe official said.

Salalima said the company had been closely coordinating with the police and the military.

The Globe official urged the local communities to cooperate with efforts to put up vital infrastructure that would benefit the particular area.

"These concerns sometimes hinder us from intensifying our expansion plans and we just hope that local communities would cooperate with us also because this is also public service, particularly for those OFWs whose relatives live in areas where there are no landlines, so they have to use their cell phones," Salalima said.

TELECOM SECTOR

More robust growth seen

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission is projecting a more robust growth in the telecom industry after the May elections, saying that a continued expansion of the sector by the second half of the year would create more opportunities for the economy.

"We believe that the sector would continue to create more jobs and opportunities, which in turn would stabilize the economy," said NTC Chair Ronald Solis.

He said the commission would come up with the estimates of growth in subscriber base this year and next although he believed that forecasts made by analysts were realistic.

Foreign analysts projected that cellular phone subscribers in the Philippines would hit about 30 million this year and grow to 35 million in 2005.

By next year, about 40 percent of the total Philippine population would own a mobile phone from the estimated 30 percent this year. By next year, studies showed that continued growth in the wireless telecom sector would surpass the 36 cellular phone penetration rate worldwide.

The NTC said that the surge in mobile phone subscribers would continue to outstrip the owners of fixed lines.

By the end of 2003, there were more than 22 million cellular phone subscribers. Of this, about 13 million came from biggest player Smart Communications Inc. and affiliate Talk N' Text of Pilipino Telephone Corp. followed by almost 9 million subscribers from Globe Telecom Inc.

Third player Sun Cellular of Digital Telecommunications Inc. accounted for about 550,000 subscribers by the end of last year.

"Prospects after elections are very promising particularly in the wireless and information technology sectors. We don't see any slowdown in the telecom sector unlike in other businesses," Solis assured.

Expectations of first quarter earnings among telecom giants led by Smart's parent firm Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. have been boosting prices at the stock market.

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Asian stocks rally; buyers seen seeking techs

MITSUBISHI Motors' newest car models are displayed at a showroom in the company's Tokyo headquarters. Standard and Poor's downgraded its ratings on debt issued by Mitsubishi Motors, hours after DaimlerChrysler said it would not offer financial aid to the troubled Japanese automaker. AFP

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks posted gains on Friday as robust US corporate earnings fueled hopes for strong regional results, while the dollar trod water ahead of a meeting of G7 finance ministers later in the day.

Investors in Asia refocused on strong US corporate results, with earnings optimism growing after Japanese electronics company Fujitsu Ltd. lifted its profit forecast and US software giant Microsoft Corp. reported higher quarterly revenue.

Most Asian stock indices rose, with Japan's Nikkei average closing up 1.2 percent at 12,120.66.

It was lifted by a 4.2-percent jump in Canon Inc. on earnings optimism ahead of its report next week. Casio Computer Co. Ltd. added 3.7 percent after it said it would beat its profit forecasts for '03-'04.

An MSCI index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan rose 1.3 percent, but was off four-year highs hit last week.

"A jump in US stocks and growing optimism on corporate earnings are prompting buyers to seek techs," said Hajime Yagi, a general manager at Meiji Dresdner Asset Management.

Fujitsu surged 9.2 percent after it said it expected its net profit to be 67 percent better than forecast in the year just ended due to pension-related special gains and asset sales.

Hong Kong stocks were up one percent by midday, but some tourism-related stocks fell a day after China reported a suspected SARS case in Beijing.

Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. was down 1.3 percent, while cosmetics chain operator Sa Sa International Holdings Ltd. fell 2.4 percent.

Taiwan shares closed up 0.2 percent, helped by more than 3 percent rises in contract microchip maker TSMC and smaller rival UMC ahead of results next week, but the suspected SARS case weighed on sentiment.

South Korea ended up 1.3 percent at a two-year high. Samsung Electronics Co., the world's biggest maker of memory chips, rose 2.7 percent to a record high.

The market showed little reaction to reports that up to 3,000 people were killed or injured when two fuel-laden trains collided and exploded at a North Korean station on Thursday, hours after leader Kim Jong-il had passed through, analysts said.

The dollar fell against the euro in New York on uninspiring US consumer price and jobless data and as US officials played down the threat of inflation, cooling market expectations that interest rates would rise soon.

The dollar was fetching 109.48 yen after rising as high as 109.85, and little changed from late US trade.

Currency traders were turning their attention to the outcome of a Group of Seven meeting of finance ministers and central bank chiefs that kicks off later on Friday. *Reuters*

Mitsubishi firms unite to keep carmaker afloat

TOKYO—Companies in Japan's Mitsubishi group rallied round Mitsubishi Motors Friday after US-German auto giant DaimlerChrysler pulled the plug on the beleaguered carmaker, throwing a revival plan into disarray.

Japan's biggest heavy machinery maker Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., major trading house Mitsubishi Corp., and Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi said they would do their best to help the automaker mired in debt and recall scandals.

"The three Mitsubishi group firms will continue to do our utmost to revitalize Mitsubishi Motors," they said in a brief joint statement.

The statement followed a surprise announcement by Mitsubishi Motors' top shareholder DaimlerChrysler that its board had decided not to extend much-needed financial aid to Mitsubishi Motors.

"In an extraordinary meeting on April 22, 2004, the board of management and the supervisory board of DaimlerChrysler decided not to participate in a capital increase planned by Mitsubishi Motors Corp. (MMC) and to cease further financial support for MMC," DaimlerChrysler said in a statement released late Thursday in Stuttgart, Germany.

Sources close to DaimlerChrysler said the company wanted to dispose of its entire 37 percent stake in MMC. A DaimlerChrysler spokesman declined to comment.

Investors reacted to the news by rushing to sell shares in Japan's only money-losing automaker. MMC shares failed to trade on Friday after the asking price dropped by the daily limit of 24.9 percent from Thursday's closing quote of 321 yen to 241 yen.

Ratings agency Standard and Poor's downgraded MMC's long-term corporate credit rating by three notches to CCC-minus, a level indicating the company is regarded as vulnerable to falling into default.

Japanese government ministers said they were also studying the impact of DaimlerChrysler's decision.

The decision "would cause a problem significant enough to affect the very existence of the company," Transport Minister Nobuteru Ishihara told a regular news conference.

Struggling with debt, MMC has suffered a sharp fall in sales in the United States and foresees an annual loss of some 72 billion yen in the year just ended.

The company also has been mired in recall scandals involving itself and its truck-making affiliate, Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corp. *AFP*

Viagra rival Cialis corners 40% of market

CIALIS, one of two new drugs challenging Viagra's dominance of the multibillion-dollar anti-impotence market, has captured up to 40 percent of the market in some countries, its developers said.

Latest figures released by Eli Lilly & Co. and Icos Corp. show the medicine accounted for 40 percent of prescriptions written for the drug class in Australia during January, and 37.5 percent in France.

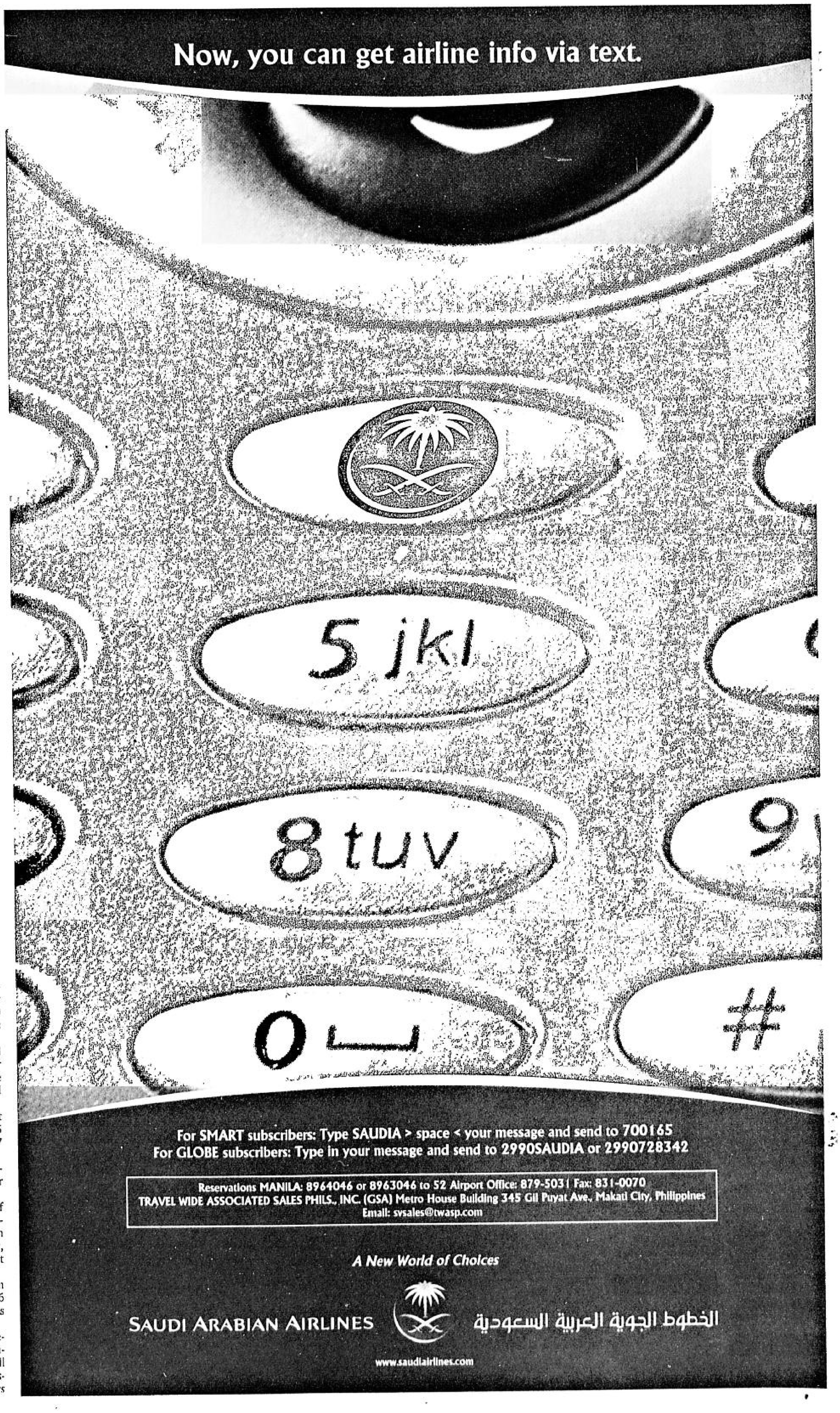
In other key markets, Cialis took 29 percent of the market in both Germany and Italy, 25 percent in Brazil, 19 percent in Spain and 17 percent in Britain.

Cialis competes against Levitra from GlaxoSmithKline Plc and Bayer AG, as well as Pfizer Inc.'s Viagra.

All three drugs work in a similar way of blocking an enzyme that limits blood flow into the penis, thereby helping to maintain an erection. But in a highly competitive market, rival drugmakers are keen to play up product differences.

Cialis has been dubbed "le weekend" pill in France because its effect can last up to 36 hours, while Levitra is being promoted for its rapid onset of action.

The latest market share figures were released to coincide with the European Association of Urology congress, where clinicians will discuss approaches to treating erectile dysfunction, among other topics. *Reuters*



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STRICTLY NO ADDENDUM SHOW SCHEDULE

Saturday, APRIL 24, 2004
8:00 AM - Registration
8:30 AM - Judging
Ring 1 - Sporting Group & Terrier
Ring 2 - Terrier & Sporting Group
12:00 NN - Lunch Break
12:30 PM - Registration
1:00 PM - Judging
Ring 1 - Hound Group/ Toy Group
Ring 2 - Toy Group Hound Group

Sunday, APRIL 25, 2004
8:00 AM - Registration
8:30 AM - Judging
Ring 1 - Non-Sporting & Herding Group
Ring 2 - Herding & Non-Sporting Group
12:00 NN - Lunch Break
12:30 PM - Registration
1:00 PM - Judging
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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC. 100 C Palanca St Quiapo, Manila will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of OCT & NOV 2003 on May 16, 2004 at 8:30am J. Lanuza Auctioneer (PDI-April 24, 2004)

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Auction Sale on May 06, 2004 all unredeemed pledges during the month of December 01-31, 2003. Nuestra Br. II 9:30am; Nuestra Br. I 10:30am; Damus Pawnshop-12:30pm; Nuestra Br. IX - 3:00pm.
Sons of J. Lanuza - Auctioneer.
(PDI-April 24, 2004)

NUESTRA-DIAJADE PAWNSHOP LAS PINAS METRO MANILA

Will have its auction sale on May 7, 2004. All unredeemed pledges during the month of December 1-31, 2003. Diajade Br. II- 11:30am.- Sons of J. Lanuza Auctioneer.
(PDI - April 24, 2004)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The public bidding for a property in front of MAKRO along Quirino Highway in Barangay Talipapa, Quezon City, with an area of 38,000 square meters, more or less (advertised last March 23, 2004 and March 25, 2004 in the Philippine Daily Inquirer), is hereby deferred to a later date.

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(In compliance with RA 941)

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Young Image course opens

A PERSONALITY development seminar workshop for kids, teens and young adults ages 5-21 years old opens on April 29. Topic coverage includes personality development, fashion and grooming, social graces, modern etiquette, effective communications with emphasis on presentation/ conversation/leadership, skin care, basic and advance modeling.

The summer program is organized by MSD Personnel Development Consultants in consortium with Manila Business College.

At the end of the 2-week seminar workshop the participants are expected to learn good grooming, poise and posture for excellent personality and self-confidence. Participants will acquired communication skills/ techniques for better communications.

Graduates of the Young Image Course will participate in a Mega Fashion Show on May 8.

For reservations and information call 781-9861 and look for Mr. Barba.

NFA triples palay procurement in March

THE timely positioning of logistics for palay buying and the immediate release of funds for the regional offices enabled the National Food Authority to increase its palay procurement by more than 300 percent in less than a month.

From 62,739 bags procured in February, the volume jumped to 271,360 bags by the third week of this month. The average daily procurement more than doubled from 10,000 bags daily to the present 20,116 per day.

NFA administrator Arthur C. Yap said the upward trend in procurement reflects the general increase in palay production experienced by farmers nationwide.

He noted the data provided by the agency's field offices in their respective buying operations showing that almost all palay producing provinces in Luzon and the Visayas reflected increases in production going up to as high as 105 percent as registered in Ilocos Sur.

The harvest estimates of the standing crop for the first quarter from January to March indicates a higher figure compared to last year's which can be attributed to factors including the favorable weather, sufficient irrigation, use of certified seeds and Gloria rice varieties.

Harvesting for the first quarter is on its peak in March while that of the second quarter is due late April to May, Yap said.

For further details on the NFA buying operations, the public may text cellphone number 0917-6210927.

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Her loving husband **Vicente "Enteng"** (†); children **Rigoberto "Reggie"** (†) and wife **Aida, Lutgarda "Girlie"** and husband **Artemio Trinidad, Jarrel "Boy"** and wife **Carmen**; grandchildren **Joel** and wife **Peary Trinidad, Maridol** and husband **Allan Fernando, Jo-An, Jojo, Jayvee, Jason, Carissa, L.A.** and wife **Cecille Trinidad.**

Great grandchildren **Nikola, Noelle, Vince, Kirsten** and **Miguel** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her ashes rests at St. Alphonsus de Liguori Chapel, Magallanes Village Makati City. Interment will be on April 26, 2004.

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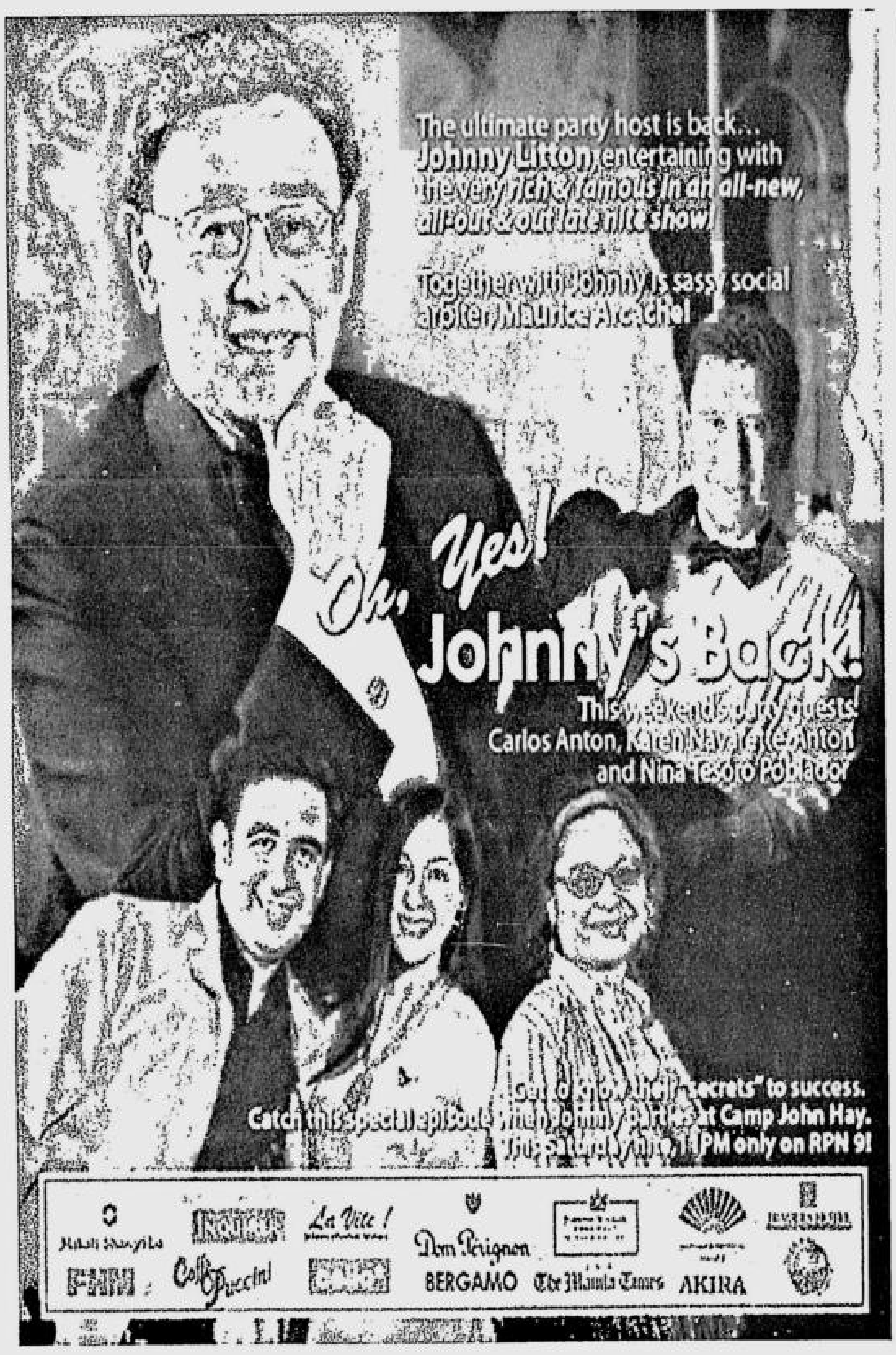
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

DESCRIPTION	Approved Budget	Bidding Fee
A. Dishwashing Machine	P1.5 Million	P3,000.00

Six (6) months contract for the ff:
(July 1 - December 31, 2004)

1. Medical/Laboratory Supplies	P1,000.00/co.
2. Pharmaceutical Supplies (medicines)	1,500.00/ principal
3. Foodstuffs Supplies	500.00/co.

Source of Funding: **PHC FUNDS**

The list of eligibility requirements will be issued at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, Purchasing Division, Basement of MAB, PHC, East Ave., Quezon City. Only eligible bidders shall be required to pay the non-refundable fee. The **deadline for the submission of requirements is on May 14, 2003 not later than 5:00 p.m.** For any inquiry, please call Purchasing Division at tel. No. 922-05-74 ask for Ms. Noemi Nocasa.

The PHC reserves the right to reject any and all bids or declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract, if there is evidence of collusion between relevant public officers or employees of the PHC and any of the bidders, or among the bidders, or between bidders and third parties, including any act which restricts, suppresses or nullifies competition, or if the BAC is found to have failed to follow the prescribed bidding procedures. The agency also reserves the right to waive any formality on the bids received, provided that such waiver does not refer to a major deviation in a bid or any requirement provided for in the **Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Executive Order No. 40** pertaining to the substance of the bid. Should such review uncover any misrepresentation made in the eligibility statement, or any changes in the situation of the bidder materially downgrade the substance of such statements, the PHC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by it in the preparation of its bids.

(Sgd.) RAUL D. JARA, M.D.
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – April 24, 25, May 1 & 2, 2004)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested contractors to apply for pre-qualification and submit sealed bids for the project:

San Mateo Landfill Gas Extraction Project
HE04-255

The Approved Budget for the Contract is PhP2,000,000.00 chargeable against PNOC EC and ADAF (New Zealand Grant) funds.

The Contractor shall excavate and construct five (5) 70 meter horizontal gas extraction wells and drill two (2) vertical wells (10" diameter x 10 meters) for leachate level monitoring and gas production.

Pre-qualification documents shall be available for issuance from the PNOC EC Operation Support Group (c/o Mr. Carlos L. Mejias) starting **April 14, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: Two Hundred (PhP200.00). Only contractors who can submit all the pre-qualification requirements on or before **April 26, 2004** are eligible to purchase the bid documents.

Bid documents shall be available to eligible bidders starting **April 19, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: One Thousand (PhP1,000.00).

The bidding shall utilize a two (2) sealed envelope system. The first envelope shall contain the Technical Bid and the second envelope shall contain the Financial Bid. The Technical & Financial Bids shall be submitted in two (2) sets each at the above address on or before **3:00 P.M. of May 7, 2004** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a Pre-bid Conference will be held on **April 22, 2004, 2:00 P.M.** at the above address.

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidders whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PNOC EC.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservices.net

(Sgd.) E.S. San Jose
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
By:
(Sgd.) Atty. E.M. Gamboa, Jr.
Vice-Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 24, 2004)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
Office of the Undersecretary

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Direct Line 633-93-42
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 local 2221/2007
E-Mail Address: jmluz@deped.gov.ph
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

INVITATION TO REBID

ADM 04-04-23

The Department of Education is inviting all security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Security Services of DepEd for 2004. The approved budget for the security services shall be P11,614,860.00.

All interested security agencies may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) starting **April 26 – May 14, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at http://www.deped.gov.ph.

A pre-bid conference will be held on **May 6, 2004**, 10:00 a.m. at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. 1, DepEd Complex, Pasig City. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on **May 20, 2004** at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI–April 24 & May 1, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Interested parties are invited to submit proposals for the rehabilitation, management and operation of the:

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Prequalification forms and Terms of Reference may be obtained form the AIT House Rehabilitation Project Secretariat, Director's Office, Institute for Small-Scale Industries (4/F Virata Hall/ ISSI Bldg.) University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P300.00 from May 3 to 7, 2004. Deadline of submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents will be on May 14, 2004. After the evaluation of the documents submitted, the prequalified proponents shall be duly notified of the schedule of subsequent activities. For inquiries, please contact Tel. No. 920-5301 to -99 loc. 4717; Tel/Fax 920-6923 (c/o Ms. Ludy Cubillas), e-mail: lourdes.cubillas@up.edu.ph.

(Sgd.) **EMERLINDA R. ROMAN**
Chancellor

(PDI–April 24 & May 1, 2004)

SCIENCE/HEALTH

E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang
Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

Practice of quack cosmetic doctors thriving

By Tessa R. Salazar

TWENTY years after a so-called cosmetic doctor first injected silicone into her breasts, a sexy actress sought medical help for her enhanced breasts which had hardened and became bigger than she had intended it to be.

Medical experts eventually found out that the so-called doctor had injected the actress with almost a liter of silicone oil in each breast to produce a visible cleavage.

More recently, another woman sought a doctor's help to find out what was wrong with her nose, which had suddenly grown lumps. Doctors eventually found out that the woman had her nose injected with silicone by a self-proclaimed cosmetic doctor.

Alarming number

Doctors are noting an alarming number of complaints involving cosmetic injections done in makeshift clinics, beauty parlors or rented apartments from as far north as Isabela province to as far south as Cotabato.

This has prompted the Philippine Academy of Aesthetic Surgery and the Philippine Society for Cosmetic Surgery to issue a warning during a health forum last week against quack cosmetic doctors.

> The bad news is that not all of the damage wrought by the quack doctor is reparable

PAAS is composed of over 40 plastic and cosmetic surgeons and the PSCS has a membership of more than 40.

Detecting fakes

Members of the two organizations said the bogus doctors have been identified, but no charges could be filed against them because complainants didn't want to come out in the open.

Signs of fakery are easy to spot, according to the PAAS and PSCS.

The fake doctor charges from P5,000 to P25,000 per session, far cheaper than legitimate standard cosmetic surgery. A breast implant alone should cost between P20,000 and P30,000.

Combined with the anesthesiologist's fee and hospitalization, breast augmentation could cost between P50,000 and P60,000 and even up to P100,000 in high-end hospitals.

For bogus doctors, any place will do as long as the patient can lie down. In one case, the quack even injected nose implants right in the patient's car.

Collagen, not silicone.

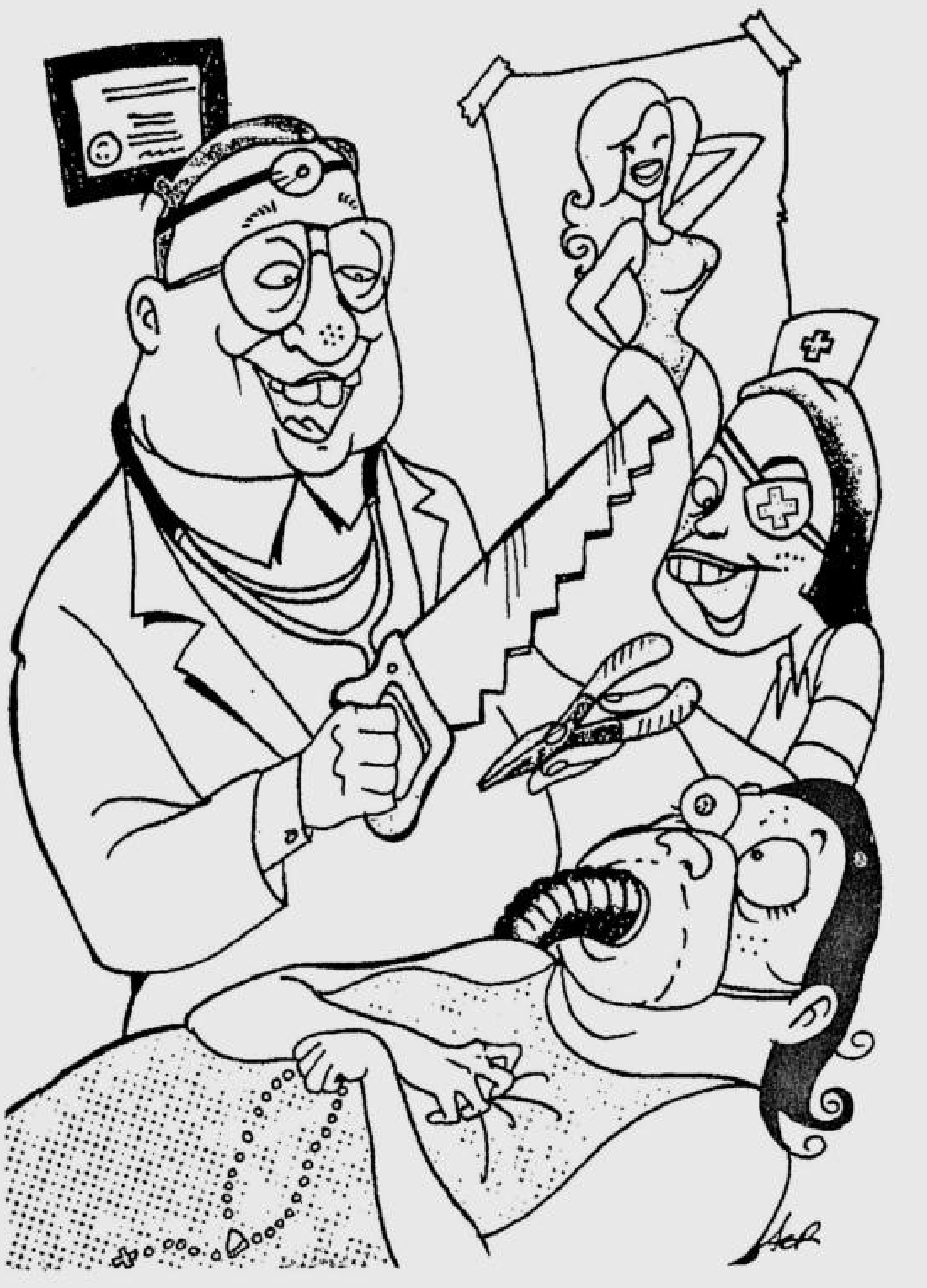
At the "operating table," cosmetic quacks claim that what they are about to inject is collagen, not silicone.

But Dr. Leonardo S. Abogado, PAAS past president, said collagen is an expensive material that could cost as much as P15,000 per cc.

"So if these fakes claim to be injecting 30 to 50 cc (of collagen), how much would that actually cost?" he asked.

Bogus doctors lure victims by assuring them that even their daughters or wives had undergone the injections. Later, when the patient observes some defects in the finished product, the quack recommends more sessions of "corrective" procedures. By the time the condition worsens, the fake surgeon has already closed shop and moved elsewhere.

Quacks often claim they are legitimate and have various clinics, but victims would later find out these clinics were actually beauty parlors.



Corrective surgery

In the end, victims of unauthorized surgeries pay more for expensive corrective surgeries.

"Legitimate cosmetic surgeons would tell you that there have been a lot (of victims) who had no choice but to undergo another operation after a few months or years," Abogado said.

Abogado, who conducted the corrective surgery on the breasts of the sexy actress, gets an average of two patients a day who were previously operated on by quack doctors.

The bad news is that not all of the damage wrought by the quack doctor is reparable.

"We can remove and reconstruct body parts, but unfortunately, many have mangled breasts that could not be restored to their original look," Abodago said.

Victims of quacks

Likely victims of quack cosmetic doctors are housewives who seek to restore the "vitality" of their sagging breasts, women who perceive their breasts to be too small, men who wish to enlarge their penises, and people who think their noses are too flat.

Most victims are afraid of undergoing surgery, thus injections seem to be the most viable alternative for them.

An injection takes just a few seconds and could be done anywhere. After about six months, the body part involved starts to harden and become "weighty."

The most frequently injected material is silicone .oil, otherwise known as Dimethylpolysiloxane hydrolyzate. It is commonly used as tissue filler to create "bulk" in the target body parts. It is also easily available because of its use as industrial lubricants for delicate equipment such as computers.

Because of inexperience and lack of proper medical training, bogus doctors err in the procedure, especially in the volume of material injected.

Abogado said there have been times when as much as 50 cc of silicone has been found in patients.

"No doctor in his right senses would give so much of an injection in his or her patient," he said.

According to him, even just a drop (0.5 cc) of the material would, in time, be coated with fibrous tissue. With such a small amount, the silicone injected will protrude from the skin.

"The small lumps created by silicone injection could mimic the signs and symptoms of cancer. The bad thing is, you won't see the difference between the lumps created by the injection and the ones that are not. These 'silicone lumps' are painful and are unsightly," he said.

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Face: The Facts Part 1

By Genevieve Tan-Torres, M.D., FPDS

Most of us are fairly paranoid about our looks. It's because society dictates us to be so. With the barrage of perfect looking models one sees in magazines, television and movies we can't deny that looks does matter.

So how do we deal with this situation? Let's start by putting our best face forward!

THE FACIAL SKIN

The facial skin, just like any other part of body skin also has three layers. It is however not as thick as the rest of the skin thus making it more fragile.

Most experts agree that a standard four-step regimen is all you need to keep your face in good shape. And for one to have a proper skin care regimen, one must first determine his/her skin type

Basically there are four skin types. People who have normal skin are the luckiest of them all. Not too oily and not much flakiness. Pores are small and rarely breakout with acne. Tolerates most products put on their faces.

On the other hand, persons with oily skin appear greasy. Pores are big and are acne-prone. People of this skin type tend to be compulsive washers

The dry skin type tends to be flaky and wrinkles prematurely. And sometimes due to too much dryness, there are areas of redness.

And lastly, the sensitive skin is defined as skin that sting, turns red or develops a rash that lasts more than half an hour after applying products.

THE REGIMEN

Cleanse

Cleansers are the most important product that one should have at home. Go buy some soap specially formulated for your face. Pumps are best, as bars tend to get messy and can be a breeding ground for bacteria. But if you're not comfortable with liquid soaps, be sure to throw away your bar soap if it starts to crack

All soaps work on filth by acting like a pair of handcuffs; one loop snags the oil: the other hangs on to water and gets the grease out. However this scenario plays out a little differently for different skin types.

If you have normal skin, there's almost always no problem choosing a cleanser. But it would still be best to get a **low detergent cleanser** (meaning not too harsh) as not to harm your skin.

If you have oily skin, then start with a gel or acid cleanser. These products contain **salicylic acid** or **glycolic acid** to degrease the skin. Over time, even oily skin can have bouts of dryness, so keep on hand a mild cleanser.

If you have dry skin, a low detergent cleanser is suited so as not to strip off the skin of its oil. Look for brands of soap that contain either **glycerin** or a type of **silicone**, such as cyclomethicone or dimethicone

If you have sensitive skin, a **mild oil free liquid cleanser** or soap also known as synthetic detergents (syndets) are your best bet. Syndets virtually never sensitize the skin. And they do not deposit calcium and magnesium left behind by ordinary soaps

Tone

Toning is the process of removing dead skin cells and refining the surface pore to prevent excess secretion thus giving skin a healthy glow, This is usually done by using an exfoliator (e.g. scrubs/ astringents) or a liquid toner.

It is not advisable to use facial scrubs everyday as these can hurt your skin. Once to twice a week scrubs are satisfactory

Skin types that have special types of toner requirements are the oily and dry skin types. Oily skin can finish the cleansing routine with an **oil removing toner** like an astringent.

Dry skin type can use an **alcohol-free toner** to restore the skin's natural pH.

Sensitive skin need not have toners in their routine. But if you need to choose a toner, choose one that says it's **hypoallergenic** to minimize sensitization of your skin

Moisturize

Moisturizers act in two ways by trapping water in your skin and by pulling water out of the air. So remember that moisture does not equal oil, therefore even oily skin types need to be moisturized

You will probably want to invest in some sort of eye cream as well since the skin around your eyes is particularly delicate and you shouldn't use regular moisturizers on it.

Protect

In tropical countries like the Philippines, sun protection is a must. Sun exposure is the most damaging external factor that affects the condition and health of our skin. It is the primary cause of prematurely aging skin (photoaging) and skin cancer. Choose a **sunscreen** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. And keep in mind that as the SPF goes higher, the better the protection

To be continued

This health information is brought to you by Skin, Hair and Nail Health Education Program (SKINHELP) of the PDS through an educational grant from Johnson & Johnson (Philippines), Inc

ADVT

Everyone's little blue pill

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

VIAGRA was originally supposed to be angina medication. And then patients in the study reported an interesting side effect that led the little blue pill treating something else entirely.

In the years since Viagra started treating male erectile dysfunction (ED), other drugs such as Cialis—known to Europeans as the "weekend Viagra" because it works for up to 36 hours—and Levitra have come on the market. And there will be other competitors soon.

A recent study by researchers at Abbott Laboratories in Chicago and the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at Lund University Hospital in Sweden indicates that targeting the dopamine D4 receptors in mice promotes erections without side effects.

On the label or paper insert of any medication is a section listing its possible side effects, such as drowsiness or nausea. But according to the paper, which appears in the April 27 issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (of the USA), "the selective D4 agonist ABT-724 can facilitate penile erection in conscious rats at doses devoid of cardiovascular, emetic, or CNS side effects."

A drug that can make men feel manly without the risk of vomiting, heart attacks or nerve damage could give Viagra a run for its money.

The D4 receptors have been found in other mammals and studies are being planned to locate the D4 receptor agonists in humans.

Other uses for Viagra

Drug development takes about a decade on the average, but Pfizer isn't willing to rest on its laurels and is now trying to find other uses for the little blue pill to increase its market share.

Last year Viagra was tested for female sexual dysfunction but the clinical trials failed.

Now comes the April 7 issue of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, where researchers led by Dr. Soma Raju from the Department of Cardiology at the CARE Hospital in India report that sildenafil, the active ingredient in Viagra, improves the quality of life for patients who suffer from a condition known as primary pulmonary hypertension (PPH).

For the study, 22 male and female PPH patients were divided into sildenafil-first (administered in 25, 50 or 100 mg doses) and placebo-first groups. After two years, researchers found that the patients who took the sildenafil pills were able to exercise 40 percent longer than the control group without pain.

Vessel disorder

According to the Pulmonary Hypertension Association's website (www.phassociation.org), pulmonary hypertension (PH) affects about two in every one million people and is a "blood vessel disorder of the lung in which the pressure in the pulmonary artery...rises above normal levels and may become life-threatening."

No one knows the cause/s of primary pulmonary hypertension (PPH), but secondary pulmonary hypertension (SPH) can be caused by bronchitis, congenital heart defects, cocaine or antidepressants.

Because the symptoms of the disease include chest pains, trouble breathing and swollen legs and ankles, doctors may not diagnose patients until after considering several other possibilities such as congestive heart failure.

Treatments for the condition range from drugs that can block calcium channels or cause blood vessels to relax to lung transplants.

A synthetic version of the natural hormone prostacyclin is the most widely prescribed treatment, causing the blood vessels to relax, lowering the pressure in the artery. However, because the drug has to be constantly inserted into the bloodstream via catheter, it's messy and expensive.

How Viagra works

Sildenafil works because by inhibiting a cyclic GMP enzyme called phosphodiesterase-5, which in turn helps the blood vessels relax, thus lowering the pressure in the pulmonary artery.

Pfizer is currently working on setting up clinical trials to have Viagra approved for treating PH, in part because doctors have already started prescribing the little blue pill for women and even babies who suffer from PH, with good results.

If sildenafil is approved for PH patients, however, it will probably not appear in its current blue form; Raju et al. used white pills for their study.

Rino Aldrighetti, president of the PHA, told Reuters, "In 1999, what I would have said to you was that 50 percent of patients die within two years of diagnosis. Now we are looking at five years."

While it's unclear whether or not patients will live longer once Viagra becomes an approved PH treatment, it would be safe to say that each patient's quality of life will improve significantly.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

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The alpha male's health

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It was almost embarrassing to answer the question since we were all males in the panel, and our answers might have very well reflected our own attitudes.

For sure, males do not intentionally wish to neglect their health. No one in his right mind would want to be sick and die young. Some misdirected attitudes however get in the way. The alpha male doesn't realize he's standing on quicksand when he thinks he's strong and healthy and could never be seriously ill; at least, not until he reaches the age of retirement, or so he thinks.

Higher disease risk

Men's risk-taking behaviors, his relatively more stressful environment and daily lifestyle, and aberrant treatment-seeking behavior result in a much higher risk of disease and poorer health than women.

The male breadwinner is so seriously focused on earning for his family that checking on his health or doing preventive measures to maintain his health always take a back seat.

And because he works so hard, the alpha male thinks he's entitled to some pleasurable recreation, including booze and smoke and the disease-promoting activities of a reckless lifestyle.

The ego factor may also have something to do in nurturing this risky attitude. Some males may think it's too un-male to whine and moan at every symptom one feels. The sad result is, it might be too late already when the medical problem is diagnosed.

We hear stories too often of males, at the peak of their careers being cut down to size with a stroke, heart attack, cancer or some disabling disease.

Disease-ridden behavior

There is no question that lifestyle issues play a central role among males, particularly those in the 20-60 age bracket.

Dr. Denis Cherry, director of the Men's Health Centre in Perth, Australia, warns that the competitive race to achieve and adapt to a more affluent lifestyle provokes an allegiance to work that produces an alarming cascade of disease-ridden behavior including:

- Long hours of either intensely stressful or repetitively boring work
- Less time for inner reflective activity
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- Excessive calorie intake
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Men outperform women

The editorial board of Men's Health Journal, headed by Prof. Dato Hui Meng Tan, MD, of Kuala Lumpur, laments that in contrast to the high profile that women's health has attained, men's health issues have been relatively neglected.

"The neglect persists despite the fact that men continue to have a higher rate of illness and death compared to women," says Dato Tan.

Dato Tan explains that men outperform women in the top 15 causes of death in both developed and underdeveloped countries. Men have higher accumulated risk factors in all stages of life. And that starts from childhood to the age of senescence when one is in his 70s.

It is important to raise the level of consciousness on men's health so the males, with or without the reminder of the females in their lives, can make it one of their priorities.

Just as they care for their cars and would hasten to bring them to the mechanic when they hear the slightest noise, they should also consult their doctor promptly for any sign or symptom such as easy fatigability, loss or increase in weight, depressed vigor, dizziness, change in bowels or urination, or even symptoms that may seem trivial.

Even in the absence of any symptom, one should have at least an annual checkup just to make sure there is nothing brewing in the body that may cause a more serious problem if undetected early.

Most diseases are like that and sometimes, the patient does not even know what hit him. The heart for instance can sometimes go into a fatal heart beat, or an artery in the brain can rupture, and to kingdom come one goes.

It's encouraging that programs for men's health are now included in the health-maintenance checkups in many hospitals. It may cost a bundle to have these checkups, but it may well be one of the best investments one can make.

KIDS QUIZ

Gangs of animals

ANIMALS are social beings too. Gangs, troops, tribes and bands are just some of the names of their groupings. (Gang is the name for a group of elks; troop, for a group of monkeys; tribe, for a group of goats and band, for a group of gorillas). Check your knowledge of the names for the group of animals by matching the name of animals on the left with the name for their group on the right.

Score: 1-4 Good; 5-7 Very Good; 8-10 Excellent

PDI Research

Animals	Name of their group
1. Alligators	a) Team
2. Ants	b) Murder
3. Cattle	c) School
4. Cockroaches	d) Pride
5. Fish	e) Smack
6. Lions	f) Intrusion
7. Wild boars	g) Congregation
8. Owls	h) Colony
9. Crows	i) Parliament
10. Jellyfish	j) Sounder
	k) Herd

ANSWERS: 1-g, 2-h, 3-k, 4-f,
5-c, 6-d, 7-j, 8-i, 9-b, 10-e

Ateneo High School Math Olympiad, April puzzle winners

LAST week we listed the problems given during the second Ateneo Math Olympiad (AMO) in the grade school level. Now let us look at what the high schoolers faced last March 18.

In the individual round of the AMO, each student is given three hours to solve three problems. Aside from the usual algebra, geometry and trigonometry topics, students underwent training (from volunteer college science majors) for a year in areas such as number theory, graph theory, proof by induction and the pigeonhole principle.

The emphasis of the AMO is on developing the attributes needed for rigorous problem solving, and not so much on speed and simple math facts—as in the case most local contests.

High School I and 2

1. One out of 12 coins is counterfeit. It is known that its weight differs from the weight of a valid coin but it is unknown whether it is lighter or heavier. How can you detect the counterfeit coin with the help of four trials using only a two-pan balance without weights?

2. We are looking for a certain number *N*. The number *N* is the largest 7-digit number which has these two properties:

- No two digits in the number are the same;
- Each of the number's digit divides *N*.

a. Find the three digits which cannot be in the number *N*. Explain why they must be excluded.

b. Find the unknown number N. Explain why it is the largest 7-digit number which has the two properties.

3. In any set of 181 square integers, prove that one can always find a subset of 19 numbers, sum of whose elements is divisible by 19.

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

High School 3 and 4

1. Find all right triangles with integer side-lengths such that their area and perimeter are equal.

2. Starting at $(1,1)$, a stone is moved in the coordinate plane according to the following rules:

- From any point *(a,b)* the stone can be moved to *(2a,b)* or *(a,2b)*.
- From any point *(a,b)* the stone can be moved to *(a-b,b)* if *a > b* or to *(a,b-a)* if *a < b*.

a. Can the stone be moved to (15,27)? to (12,100)?

b. For which positive integers, *x,y* can the stone be moved to *(x,y)*?

3. For any positive integer *n*, let *s(n)* denote the number of ordered pairs *(x,y)* of positive integers for which

$$\frac{1}{x}+\frac{1}{y}=\frac{1}{n}$$

Find all positive integers *n* for which *s(n)=5*.

Explaining answers

In the team category, participants undergo a power round where they are given 10 minutes to work out solutions to moderately hard brainteasers. They place their answers on acetate and explain them to judges from the college faculty.

The judges then give them scores based on elegance, conciseness, ingenuity and correctness, among others. For what use are problem-solving skills if we cannot communicate our solutions clearly to other people?

Individual winners for the first and second year category are Edmund Soriano and Alvin Belleza; for the third and fourth year category, Rafael Jose Olympia and Luis Alberto Mendoza.

Team winners are Ryan Joseph Bitanga, Nicolo Rimando and Jose Benedicto DuhayLungsod.

Our thanks to Dr. Jose Marasigan and the other judges, and Mark Dimal and the other coaches and Ateneo Math Club members. We urge other schools to conduct similar competitions, where motivated students can develop their problem-solving abilities.

Solution to puzzle

By the way, Alfredo Romero Jr. [aqrj1@hotmail.com], Ramon Marfil [ridm@edsamail.com] and Philip Sithara [sithara_Philip@yahoo.com] were the first three readers to solve the April 3 puzzle.

The solution is: (1-(2/(3/((4-5)/6-(7+8)))))*9=100.

Romero explains:

First take (4-5) = -1. Then (-1)/6 = -1/6. Following the parentheses, (-1/6)-(7+8) = (-1/6)-(15) = -91/6 and so 3/(-91/6) = -18/91. Then 2/(-18/91) = -182/18, and 1 - (-182/18) = 1 + (182/18) = (18/18) + (182/18) = 200/18. Finally, (200/18)*9 = (100/9)*9 = 100.

The winners each receive a copy of my book "Are Scientists Atheists?" Congratulations, and watch out for the next installment of puzzles.

Healthy skin regimen for thoroughly clean, visibly healthy looking skin

Liquid Neutrogena
DEEP CLEAN
DEEP CLEAN
Extra Gentle Cleanser
Neutrogena
Neutrogena
Neutrogena

You got only one face so pamper it to the hilt.

Dermatologists say that having flawless skin – pimple-free, sans freckles and warts, is genetic. However, a beauty regimen which involves cleansing, toning & moisturizing, coupled with a healthy lifestyle can help in giving you visibly healthy-looking skin.

A good skin care regimen always starts with cleansing. Choosing the right facial cleansers depend on one's skin type. It is best to ask your dermatologist on what type of cleanser would be safe to use on your face so as to avoid irritation. Make sure you only use cleansers that rinse thoroughly and do not leave behind any harmful residue.

Toning, which removes the last traces of dirt, oil and make-up after cleansing, also tightens pores and prepares the skin for moisturization. Use alcohol-free toners that won't strip skin of its natural oils, leaving you with a refreshing feeling without the tightness and stinging sensation on skin.

After cleansing and toning, it is advisable to use a moisturizer to trap water in the skin and add back moisture after cleansing. Moisturizers also come in different types (liquid, cream) suited for different kinds of skin. During the day, it is best to use a moisturizer with sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to help protect the skin from the damaging effects of both UVB and UVA rays.

With the proliferation of various skin products in the market, settling for the right brand of products for your daily skin care regimen becomes difficult. However, it would be best to go for a dermatologist-recommended formula. Getting a tested brand is a wise decision.

Neutrogena® is used by consumers worldwide because of its breakthrough products that have been clinically-proven safe yet effective for a wide range of skin care needs. Starting your cleansing regimen with **Neutrogena® Facial Bar or Liquid Neutrogena®** can give you thorough cleansing with visible results. Both bar and liquid cleanser are glycerin-rich and rinses off completely, leaving no residue that can harm and leave skin looking dull over time

For the most sensitive skin, there's **Neutrogena® Extra Gentle Cleanser**, a dermatologist-recommended formula that is soap-free, fragrance-free and contains only the mildest ingredients. **Neutrogena® Deep Clean Facial Cleanser and Neutrogena® Deep Clean Foaming Cleanser** are two products that give you the deepest clean feeling. **Neutrogena® Deep Clean Facial Cleanser** provides deep down cleansing as it penetrates into the pores, dissolving deep-seated dirt, oil and make-up. It also removes dead surface skin cells that can dry, roughen and dull your complexion, thus leaving you with softer, fresher skin. **Neutrogena® Deep Clean Foaming Cleanser**, on the other hand, provides long-lasting oil control to improve the look and feel of skin. Its rich, creamy foam works as hard in dissolving and washing away dirt, oil, and skin-dulling impurities that can build up in pores.

Cleansing is a very important aspect of a good skin care regimen. And with dermatologist-recommended products from Neutrogena®, you can never go wrong. Experience pure and gentle cleansing for a thoroughly clean, visibly healthy looking skin with Neutrogena cleansers.

ADVT

ASK THE DENTIST

Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Retainers for 4 years

I'VE been wearing retainers for four years now but every time I remove it, my teeth start to move and I have large spaces between my teeth. Do I have to wear my retainers forever so my teeth will look good all the time? By the way, I never had braces, only a retainer.

William F.

A retainer can only do so much and if your original problem was having large spaces then you should have had braces first. Every time you removed your braces, the last 14 hours of retaining or closing of the space is erased, and relapse can occur.

Braces are not removable, so the movement or retaining action is preserved.

My advice is for you to wear braces first, then retainers. If you don't want to wear braces then stop wearing retainers since they don't work in your case anyway and look for other alternatives such as bonding or veneers.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

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☑ Hypertension ☑ Heart Disease ☑ Or a Stressful lifestyle

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proven to **DISSOLVE BLOOD CLOTS**,
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Add **PLASMIN** to your diet and experience the following benefits:
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- reduction in blood sugar and cholesterol levels
- reduction in blood pressure and chest pain

Take **PLASMIN** daily and be protected from stress & killer diseases that run in your family.

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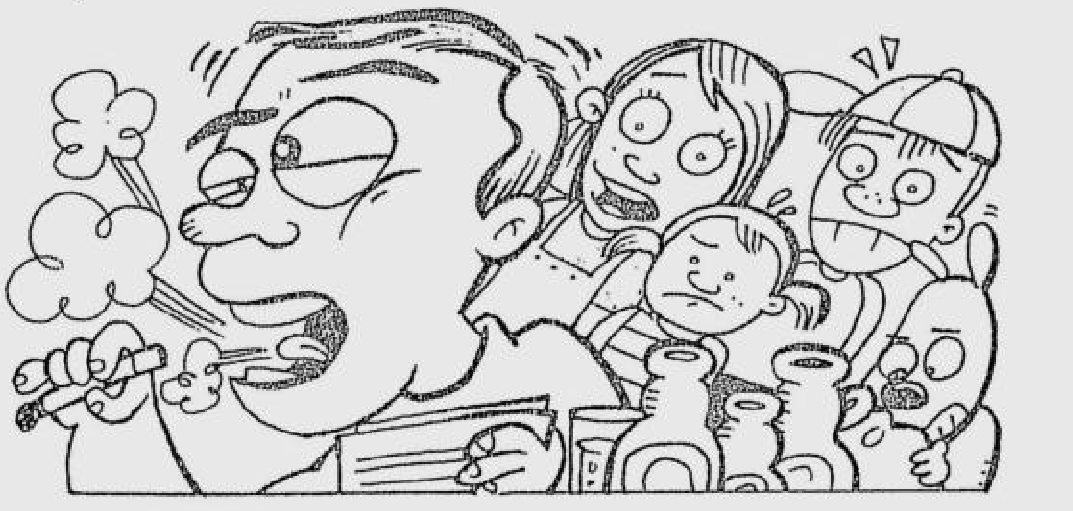
By Rafael R. Castillo, MD



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KIDS QUIZ

Gangs of animals

ANIMALS are social beings too. Gangs, troops, tribes and bands are just some of the names of their groupings. (Gang is the name for a group of elks; troop, for a group of monkeys; tribe, for a group of goats and band, for a group of gorillas). Check your knowledge of the names for the group of animals by matching the name of animals on the left with the name for their group on the right.

Score: 1-4 Good; 5-7 Very Good; 8-10 Excellent

PDI Research

Animals	Name of their group
Alligator	a) Team
Ants	b) Murder
Cattle	c) School
Cockroaches	d) Pride
Fish	e) Smack
6. Lions	Intrusion
Wild boars	Congregation
8. Owls	h) Colony
9. Crows	i) Parliament
10 Jellyfis	j) Sounder
	k) Herd

ANSWERS: 1-g, 2-h, 3-k, 4-f, 5-c, 6-d, 7-j, 8-i, 9-b, 10-e

Ateneo High School Math Olympiad, April puzzle winners

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

LAST week we listed the problems given during the second Ateneo Math Olympiad (AMO) in the grade school level. Now let us look at what the high schoolers faced last March 18.

In the individual round of the AMO, each student is given three hours to solve three problems. Aside from the usual algebra, geometry and trigonometry topics, students underwent training (from volunteer college science majors) for a year in areas such as number theory, graph theory, proof by induction and the pigeonhole principle.

The emphasis of the AMO is on developing the attributes needed for rigorous problem solving, and not so much on speed and simple math facts —as in the case most local contests.

High School 1 and 2

1. One out of 12 coins is counterfeit. It is known that its weight differs from the weight of a valid coin but it is unknown whether it is lighter or heavier. How can you detect the counterfeit coin with the help of four trials using only a two-pan balance without weights?

2. We are looking for a certain number *N*. The number *N* is the largest 7-digit number which has these two properties:

- No two digits in the number are the same;
- Each of the number's digit divides *N*.

a. Find the three digits which cannot be in the number *N*. Explain why they must be excluded.

b. Find the unknown number SNS. Explain why it i the largest 7-digit number which has the two properties.

3. In any set of 181 square integers, prove that one can always find a subset of 19 numbers, sum of whose elements is divisible by 19.

High School 3 and 4

1. Find all right triangles with integer side-lengths such that their area and perimeter are equal.

2. Starting at S(1,1)S, a stone is moved in the coordinate plane according to the following rules:

- From any point *(a,b)* the stone can be moved to *(2a,b)* or *(a,2b)*.
- From any point *(a,b)* the stone can be moved to *(a-b,b)* if *a* > *b* or to *(a,b-a)* if *a* [illegible] *b*.

a. Can the stone be moved [illegible] (15,27)? to (12,100)?

b. For which positive integers, [illegible] can the stone be moved to *(x,y)*?

3. For any positive integer *n*, let [illegible] denote the number of ordered pairs *(x,y)* of po[illegible] integers for which

1

Find all positive intege[illegible] *n* for

Explaining answers

In the team category, participants undergo a power round where they are given 10 minutes to work out solutions to moderately hard brainteasers. They place their answers on acetate and explain them to judges from the college faculty.

The judges then give them scores based on elegance, conciseness, ingenuity and correctness, among others. For what use are problem-solving skills if we cannot communicate our solutions clearly to other people?

Individual winners for the first and second year category are Edmund Soriano and Alvin Belleza; for the third and fourth year category, Rafael Jose Olympia and Luis Alberto Mendoza.

Team winners are Ryan Joseph Bitanga, Nicolo Rimando and Jose Benedicto DuhayLungsod.

Our thanks to Dr. Jose Marasigan and the other judges, and Mark Dimal and the other coaches and Ateneo Math Club members. We [illegible] other schools to conduct similar competitions [illegible] motivated students can develop their proble[illegible]

Solution to puzzle

[illegible] the [illegible] Alircan Rom[illegible] mail.com], Ramon Mart[illegible] [ridn[illegible] om] and Philip Sithara [sithara_Philip@yahoo[illegible] were the first three readers to [illegible] the Apr[illegible] pu[illegible]

The [illegible] solution [illegible] 100

Romero expla[illegible]

First take (4-[illegible] Fo[illegible]

[illegible]ng the parentheses [illegible] (15, 91, [illegible] and [illegible] 18 91 [illegible] 182 18 and 1[illegible] 18) (18 18) · (182 18[illegible] 200[illegible] 100

(100 91) [illegible] 100

The winners each [illegible] Al Scientists Atheists?" Con[illegible]tions [illegible] for the next installment of [illegible]

ASK THE DENTIST
Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Retainers for 4 years

I'VE been wearing retainers for four years now but every time I remove it, my teeth start to move and I have large spaces between my teeth. Do I have to wear my retainers forever so my teeth will look good all the time? By the way, I never had braces, only a retainer.

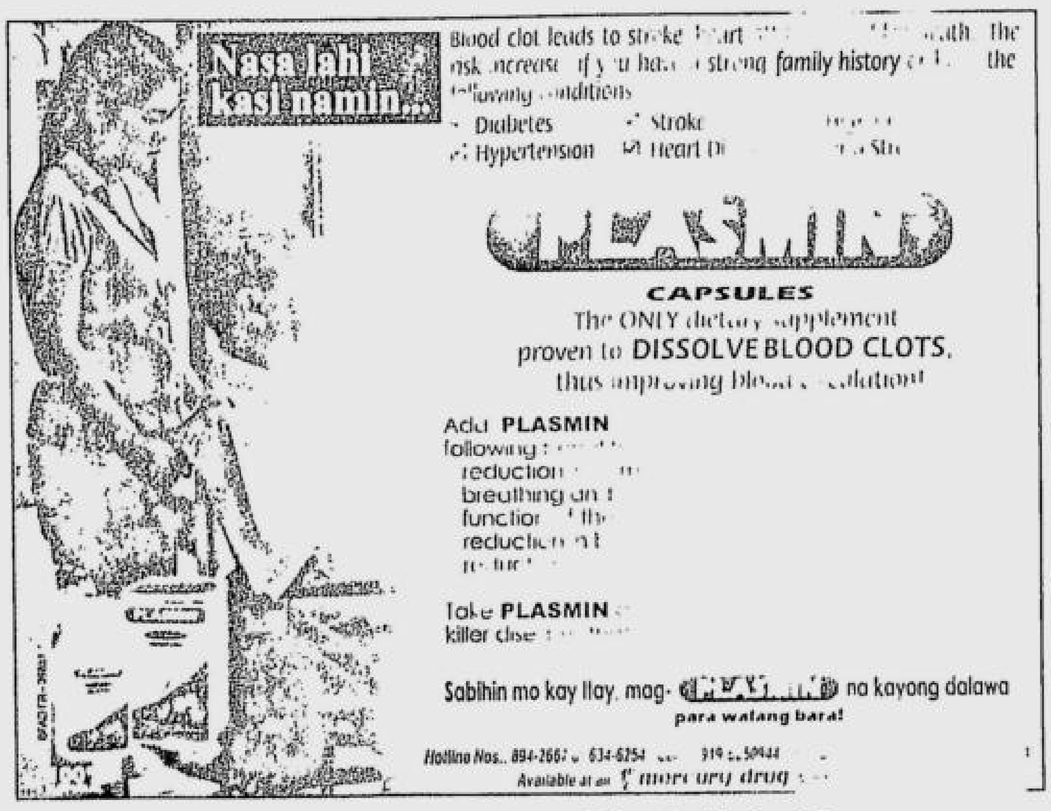
William E

A retainer can only do so much and if your original problem was having large spaces then you should have had braces first. Every time you removed your braces, the last 14 hours of retaining or closing of the space is erased, and relapse can occur.

Braces are not removable, so the movement or retaining action is preserved.

My advice is for you to wear braces first, then retainers. If you don't want to wear braces then stop wearing retainers since they don't work in your case anyway and look for other alternatives such as bonding or veneers.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yaho



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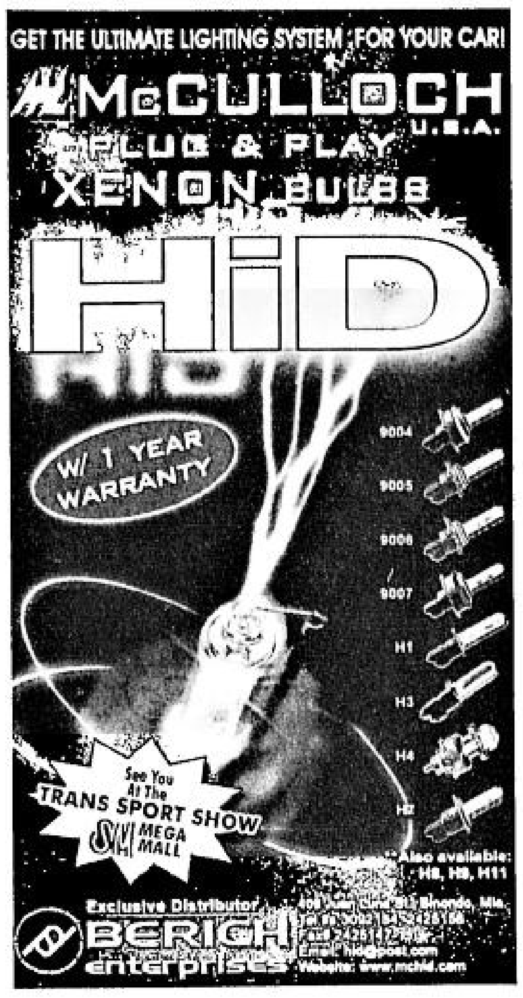
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BAGASSE FACILITY

PNOC, British firm to invest ₱3.1B

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The state-run Philippine National Oil Corp. and a British company will sign today a memorandum of agreement for a P3.1-billion bagasse co-generation facility at First Farmers Sugar Mill at Dos Hermanas, Talisay, Negros Occidental.

The bagasse-powered power plant will be capable of producing 30 megawatts of electricity, according to Jose Ma. Villanueva, president of First Farmers Holding Corp.

Bagasse is a fibrous waste product from sugarcane processing.

The MOA will be signed at the mill site today by representatives of the Philippine National Oil Co., Talisay Bioenergy Inc. and Bronzeoak Philippines Inc. of the United Kingdom.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who arrived in Bacolod City yesterday, will witness the MOA signing.

Villanueva and FFHC corporate secretary Rafael Lizares Jr. had earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with the Talisay Bioenergy Inc., represented by Graham Stowell, to build, operate and transfer the co-generation plant at First Farmers.

The power plant is expected to be completed in August 2006.

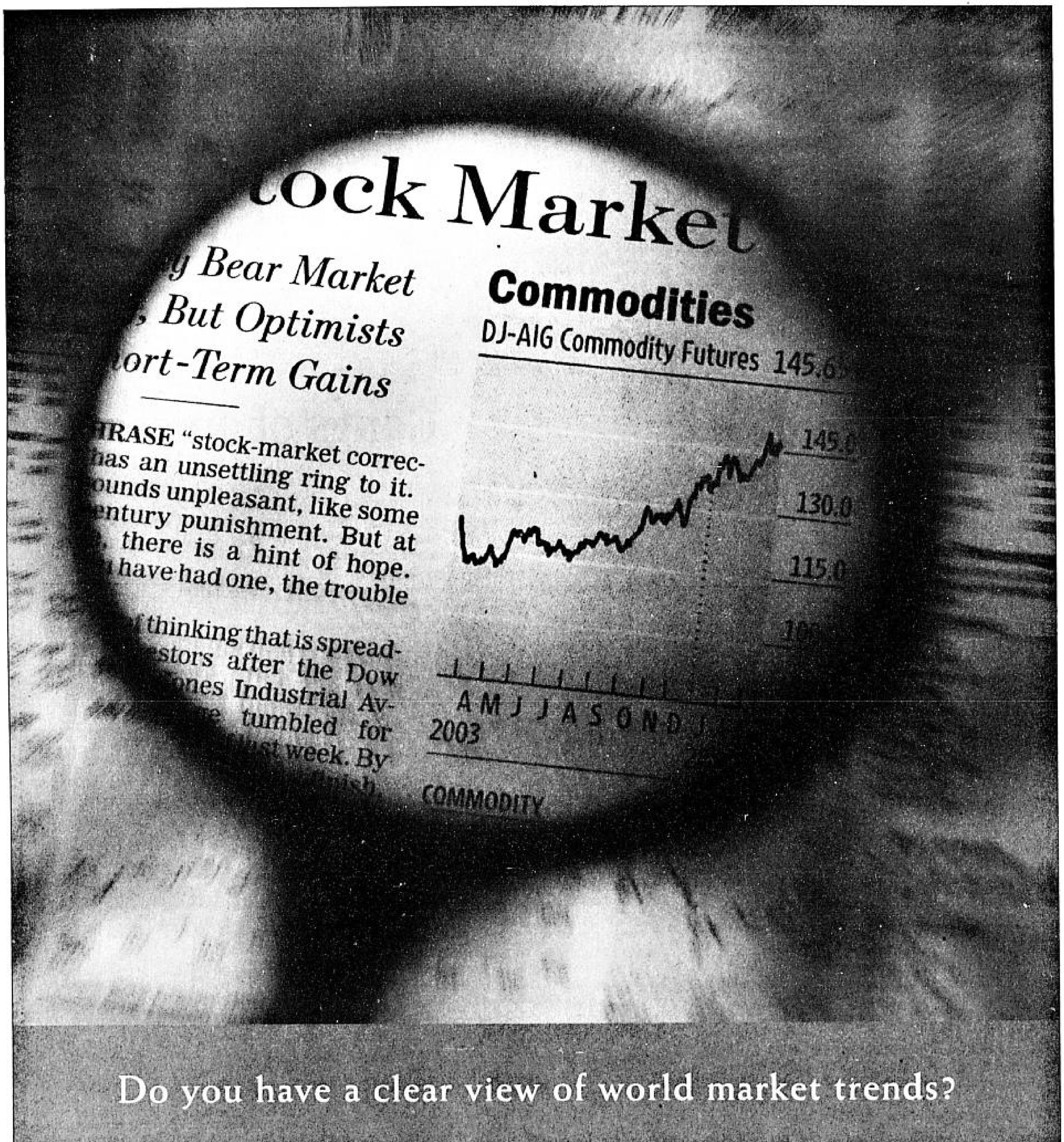
"It will be the first of its kind in the Philippine sugar landscape. It will have a rated steam capacity of 160 metric tons per hour and electricity capacity of 30 megawatts," he said.

The surplus power will be sold to the Central Negros Electric Cooperative Inc., Villanueva said.

FFHC will supply TBI the bagasse that it produces through its mill operations, he added.

"It will have a multiplier effect that will benefit not only the First Farmers but also the surrounding communities through new opportunities for growth," he said.

Thelmo Cunanan, PNOC's president and chief operating officer, yesterday said the Macapagal administration was committed to bringing not only energy but also indigenous affordable power to all the communities in the Philippines.



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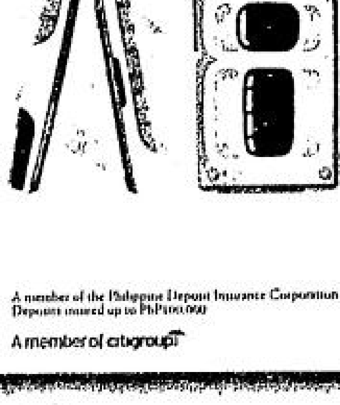

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More farmers getting loans for business

DAVAO CITY—More farmers, fishermen and small businessmen are availing themselves of loan assistance programs to enhance productivity or to start a business.

"This is a good sign," said Nelson Buenaflor, president and chief executive officer of the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp., during this year's national Agri-Credit week.

He said the number of creditors since 2001 has been increasing from P1.4 billion worth of total loan releases that year, P1.6 billion in 2002 and some P3 billion last year.

The lending performance of the company has risen to 22 percent during the three-year period which, Buenaflor said, would likely increase in succeeding years.

He said that Quedancor will get some P5 billion in fresh loans from the Equitable-PCI bank and the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Half of this fund would be used to give more loans to the farming, agriculture and small-medium scale entrepreneurs and the other half to the investment in zero-coupon bonds.

Buenaflor said the Quedancor has an existing client base of 580,000 nationwide and might increase to a million by the end of 2005.

Buenaflor said the increasing number of rural folk who want to start their own business bodes well to the growth and development of the area.

Buenaflor said the growth would translate to more jobs, livelihood and increase in productivity. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Dipolog seeks to duplicate Gensan feat

DIPOLOG CITY—Local businessmen are studying the possibility of using the development of General Santos City as a "model" that Zamboanga Peninsula could emulate.

"Dipolog City is like GenSan 20 years ago," said Arfel Paqueo, executive director of the Dipolog Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The transformation of GenSan from an agricultural to globally competitive industrial-commercial hub was preceded by a massive social awareness campaign on the role of people in economic development.

The United States also poured in funds to construct an international airport, a seaport and roads unusually wider than roads in other parts of the country.

"It took some time, and there was resistance but it was done," Paqueo, who was then based in GenSan, also said.

With government support in terms of infrastructure, Paqueo said it was possible that GenSan could be duplicated in other parts in Mindanao.

The adoption of the GenSan development model was discussed during the recent Zamboanga Peninsula Business Conference.

The ZPBC covers Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Misamis Occidental, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-tawi and the cities of Dipolog, Dapitan, Pagadian, Isabela, Oroquita, Tangub, Ozamis, Tangub and Zamboanga.

He said that the poor enforcement of laws, lack of information on government policies and peace and order concerns have delayed the economic development of the Zamboanga Peninsula.

"A right environment must be in place to give way to the development and progress in the area. We have to develop a public character to participate in the development process," he said.

Paqueo said that unfortunately, negative reports in the media have created the false impression that the entire province is war torn.

"One shooting incident in the boondocks is often presented in media as happening all over Mindanao, which is not really the case," he said. *Fe V. Zamora, Inq7.net*

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre ◼ Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

All is not lost for Camile Velasco

By Nestor U. Torre

VELASCO. Couldn't cope with "American Idol's" extremely rigorous demands.

LOCAL viewers of "American Idol" were recently crushed when Camile Velasco, one of the two Fil-Am finalists in the popular singing tilt, was booted out of the singing tilt. That leaves only Jasmine Trias as our remaining bet for US pop-musical stardom.

Camile had a lot going for her—great looks, a husky singing voice, and winsome, telegenic appeal. The competition's three judges were lavish in praising her stellar potential when they first heard her perform in Hawaii.

Downfall

So, what happened? Camile's eventual downfall was the result of her being so young and raw that she couldn't cope with the talent search's extremely rigorous demands.

Camile did very well when she sang in her "signature" Lauryn Hill style. But "American Idol" makes it a point to test its finalists' versatility by requiring them to change performing styles from week to week.

Being relatively young and inexperienced, Camile couldn't keep up with the quicksilver changes, and her performances became increasingly nervous and insecure.

The judges saw this, and warned her early on in the finals to get her act together, or she wouldn't survive the program's "cruel" winnowing process. Alas, their fears were confirmed soon enough.

Selection process

The young Fil-Am looker isn't really to "blame" for her failure to stay the course. The show's selection process is simply too stringent for most teen talents to cope with. To illustrate: one week, the finalists with the lowest scores were the three teenagers in the group.

But all is not lost for Camile Velasco. After she goes on a planned promotional performance tour with 10 of the show's 12 finalists, she should think of paying the Philippines a visit.

We're pretty sure that, with the popularity of "American Idol" here, and Camile's extensive exposure on it, she will be welcomed by the local entertainment industry with juicy recording, concert and even acting offers that should make her a star in no time.

Camile should consider this option because, as some *balikbayan* talents have shown, local entertainment now pays substantial talent fees, even in dollar terms. If US show biz can't assure her of fame and fortune, the Philippine music scene can!

Kevin Costner's love for westerns burns brightly

LONDON—Kevin Costner has always loved westerns. The trouble is, Hollywood doesn't share his enthusiasm.

But that has never stopped this stubborn loner from believing in the genre—and he was triumphantly proven right when "Dances With Wolves" was garlanded with Oscars.

"God knows I am not one to predict what is commercial," admitted the 50-year-old star who may no longer rank in the Hollywood A-list, but can still pull in almost $60 million at the US box office for his latest western, "Open Range." "I think I am a loner and 'stubborn' might be one word that is attached to me," Costner told Reuters.

Seven Oscars

"Dances with Wolves" captured seven Oscars and took almost $185 million at the US box office.

Westerns have not been fashionable for a long time in Hollywood, but Costner ploughed an obstinate furrow with "Wyatt Earp" and "Silverado." "There are plenty of bad westerns. But it was the great ones that fired my imagination," Costner said.

"Open Range" is an old-fashioned tale about two freewheeling cowboys, played by Robert Duvall and Costner, who also directs the movie. They are out to settle scores with an evil cattleman.

Time Magazine called it "a mature and satisfying treat."

Reuters

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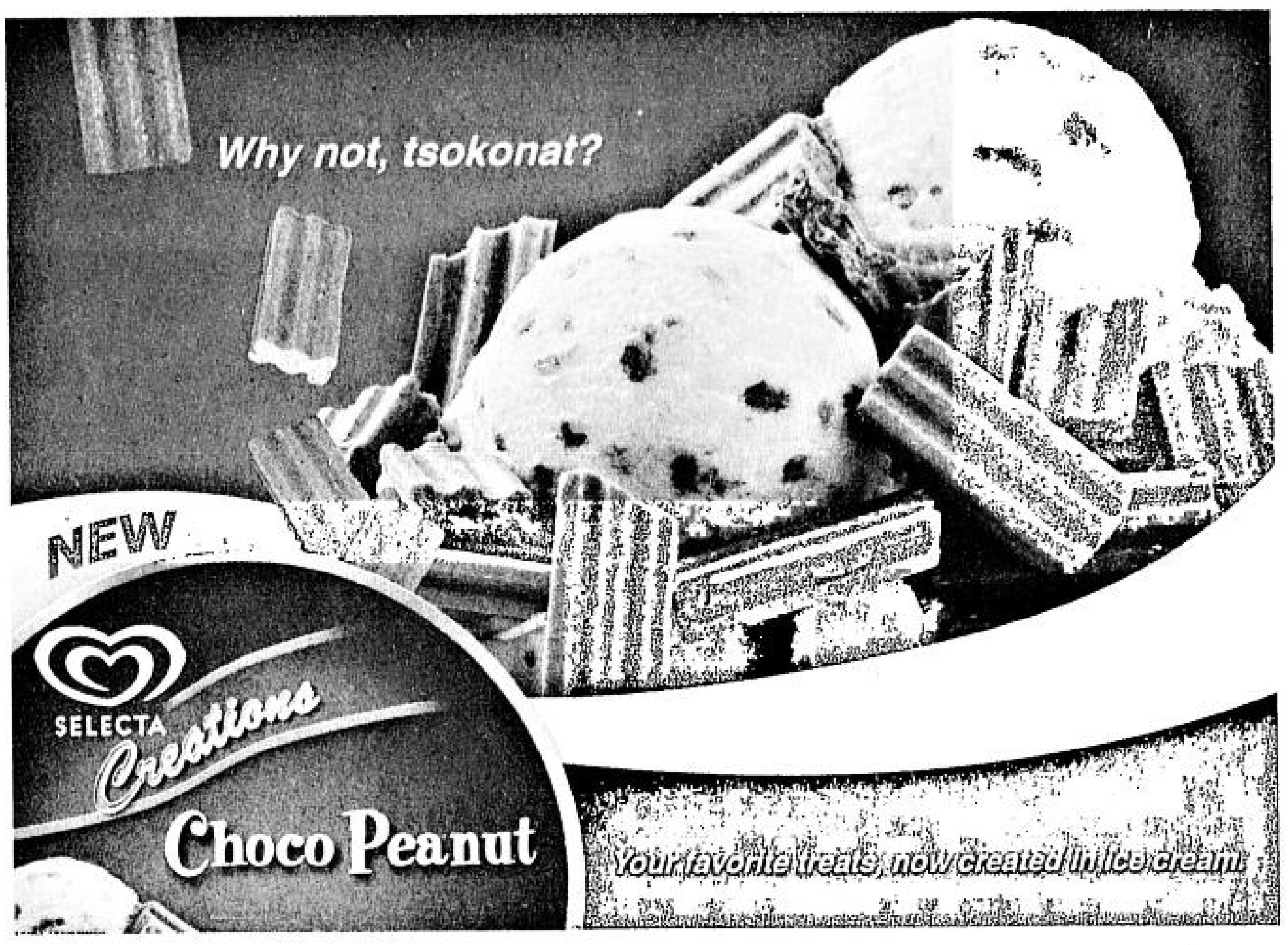

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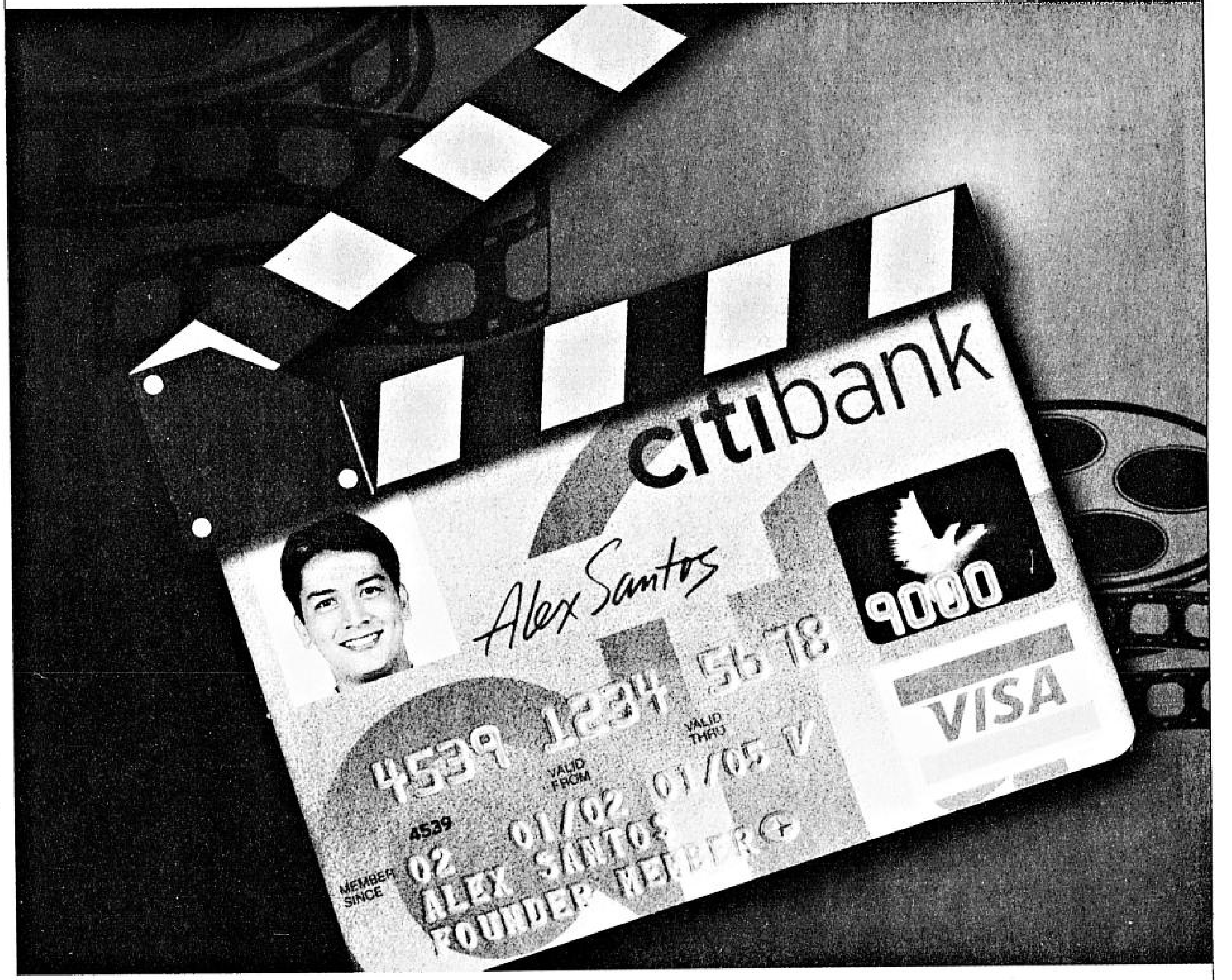

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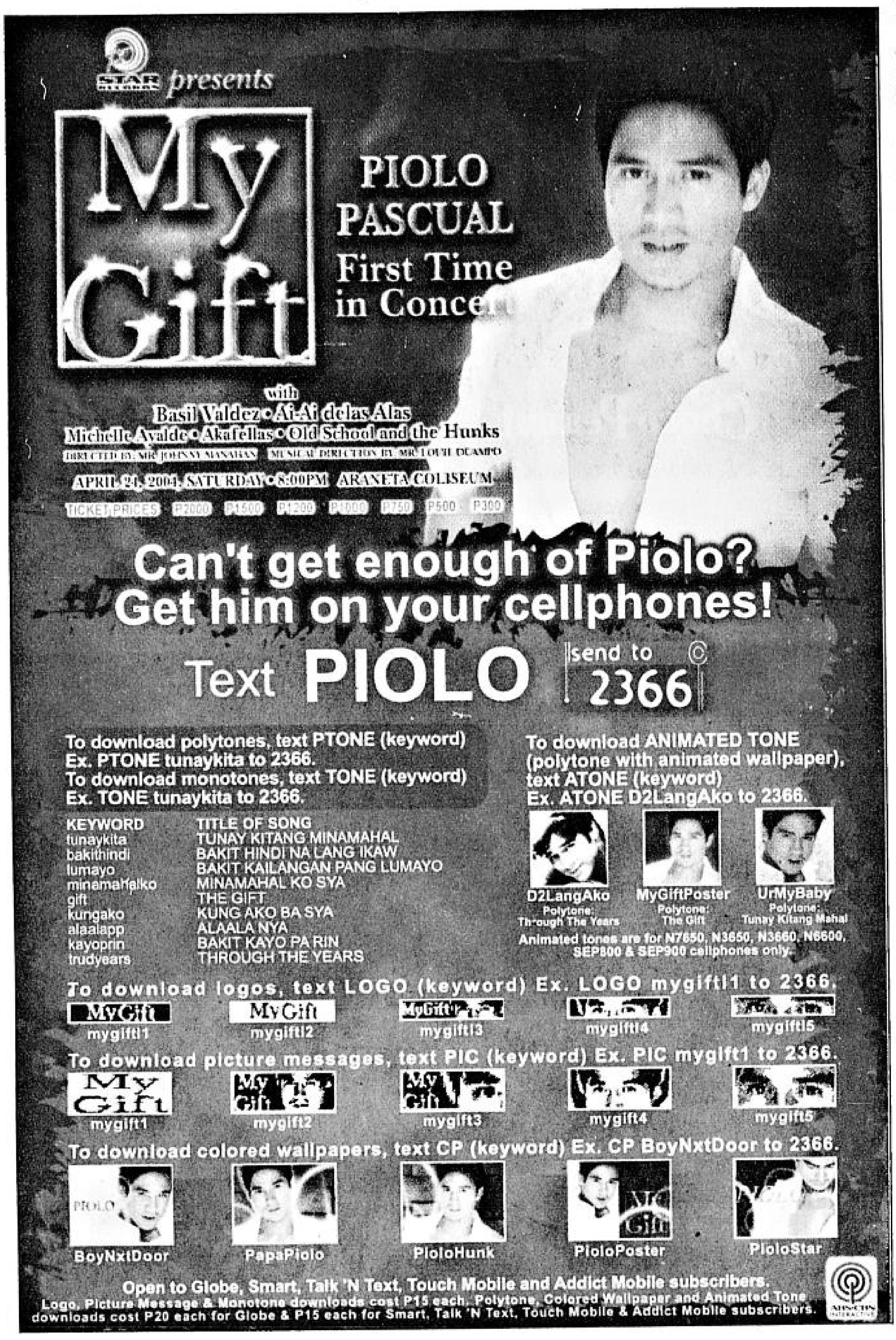
Jon Red's 'ASTIGmatism' wins Asian digital film award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gift	THE GIFT
kungako	KUNG AKO BA SYA
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By Rica Arevalo

JON Red, a pioneer of digital filmmaking in the country, won the Silver DV (Digital Video) award at the 28th Hong Kong International Film Festival for his work, "ASTIGmatism."

Red's film competed with 60 other entries. He did not expect the award, but he became hopeful when a jury member—German critic Ulrich Gregor—said that the main criterion was to maximize experimentation and combine it with good storytelling. (China's "Incense" won the Gold DV Award).

"ASTIGmatism" captures the point of view of Bien, played by Robin Padilla, an assassin out to kill his former gangmates. Padilla records what he "sees" by becoming a camera operator, and at the same time, acting out his scenes.

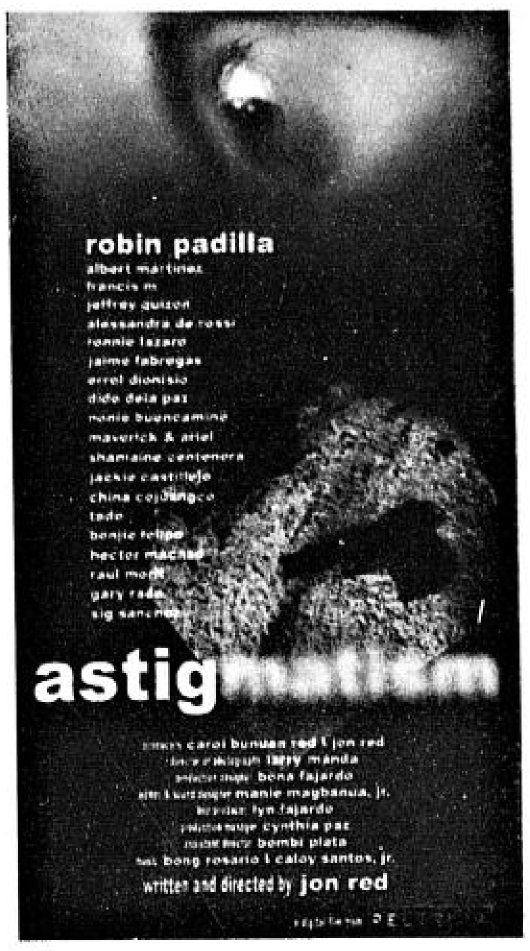
Narrative tool

Red narrates, "According to Mr. Gregor, 'ASTIGmatism' won because of the use of the subjective camera as a narrative tool. He said that although this has been done before, it was efficiently used throughout the movie and 'could go down in history as one of the few films if not the only work, that did this.'"

How did he convince Padilla to star in a low-budget film? "Last year, Robin approached me to direct a film for him, but the project did not materialize. I told him about 'Astig' and he became interested in the lead character. I warned him that there wasn't going to be any pay. He still said, 'Yes!'"

The agreement with the rest of the cast and crew was the same. Their positive reply indicated their "willingness to experiment with challenging—even absurd—roles."

PADILLA. Camera operator *and* actor.

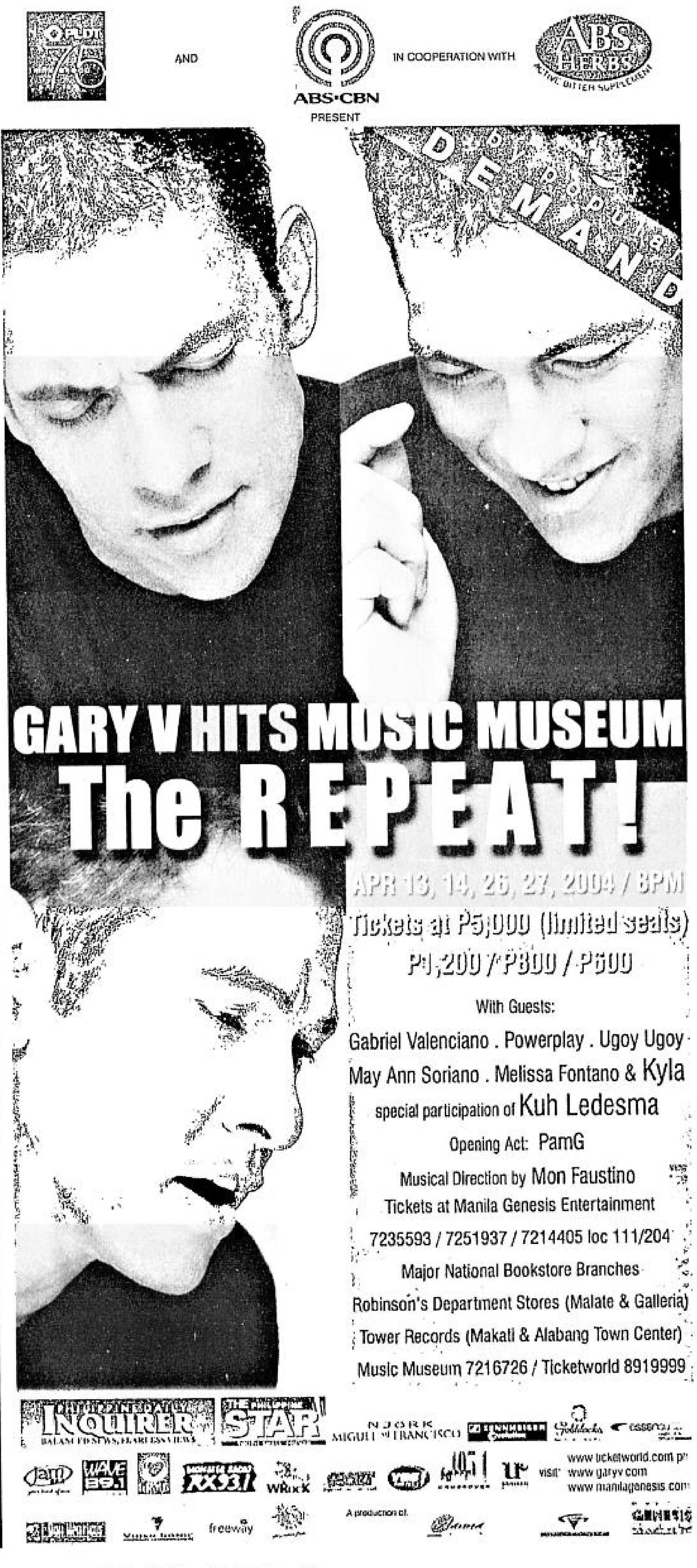


THE MOVIE combines experimentation with good storytelling.

Struggle

Like Jon's previous films, "Still Lives" and "Utang ni Tatang," his latest feat indicates that his struggle as an experimental filmmaker is paying off. He adds, "I appreciate the fact that the Hong Kong filmfest focused on Asian digital films and did not merely treat it as a side show. This implies that DV is a valid and significant format, despite criticisms from traditional filmmakers."

"ASTIGmatism" will have a theatrical release later this year.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Bublé, McDonald sizzle in albums of updated classics

By Rito P. Asilo

HEARTTHROB Michael Bublé and husky, soulful baritone Michael McDonald deliver winners in their latest releases, "Come Fly With Me" and "Motown," respectively.

With their distinctive, powerful voices, the twentysomething heartthrob and the 52-year-old Doobie brother breathe new life and add a welcome pastiche of contemporary flavors to old but not dated classics.

In McDonald's 14-track tribute to Berry Gordy's Detroit empire, he teams up with Fourplay as he revisits Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and some timeless R&B classics with his distinctive blue-eyed soul.

Purists

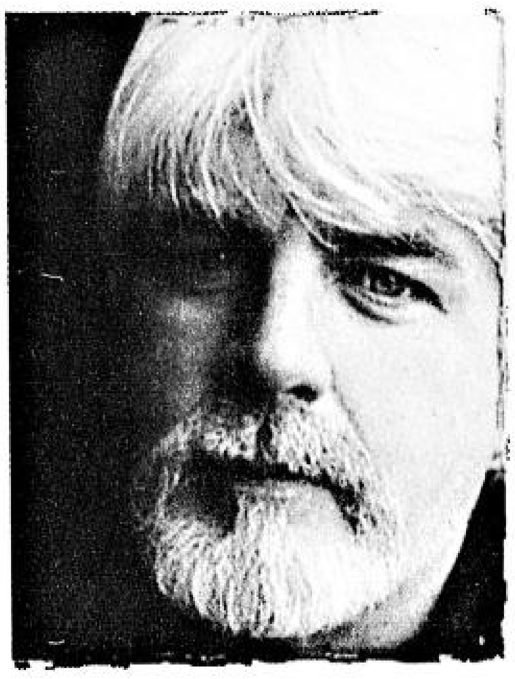
You have to give him credit for risking the ire of soul music purists, but he easily wins points for his catchy renditions of the highly infectious "Ain't No Mountain High Enough"; the bluesy, funky "Too High"; the rousing "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours"; the slow, sensual groove of Gaye's "Distant Lover"; the powerful "I'm Gonna Make You Love Me"; the enviably smooth, seamless falsetto shifts in "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" and the emotional urgency that he imparts in "All in Love Is Fair."

Even the pared-down "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)," devoid of its usual mirthful tone here, is a must-hear for bravely tampering with and successfully improvising from its well-loved arrangement. Missteps: the tricky "I Believe (When I Fall In Love It Will Be Forever)" and the seemingly misplaced "I Want You."

Nostalgia

With McDonald's album, it's perfectly alright to lapse into nostalgia as you dance and sing along with him.

On the other hand, the younger Michael—Bublé, that is—continues to thrill his admirers with his powerful, youthful crooning. In "Come Fly With Me," he once again delivers the goods by serving up his distinctive renditions of swing music and romantic ballads.



McDONALD. Pays tribute to Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and the Motown sound.

It may not be an album full of new materials—the eight-track CD contains three recorded-as-live versions of previously released tracks ("Fever," and upbeat covers of "For Once in My Life" and Van Morrison's "Moondance")—but four of the other five new tracks are worth every devalued peso you spend for the album. The exception: a really schmaltzy "Can't Help Falling in Love."

David Foster puts the appropriate, playful zing into Frank Sinatra's swing classic, "Nice and Easy," while Jason Goldman's fun and frolicky arrangement to "Mack the Knife" captures the song's spirit.

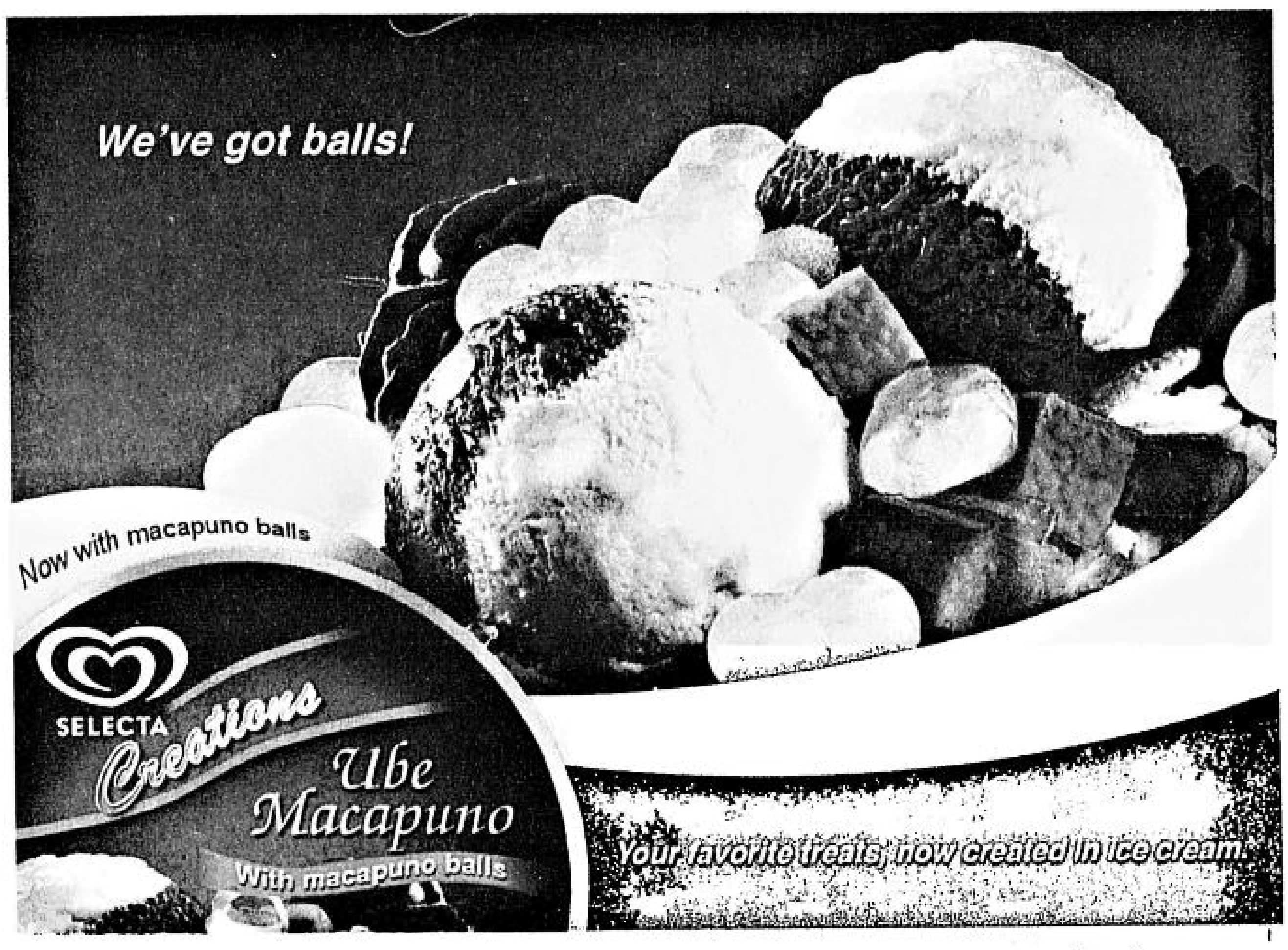
Playfulness and propriety

More than any of this album's sleek production elements, it's really Bublé's fantastic vocal pipes that deliver the thrills and chills. With a voice that is as powerful with high notes as it is comfortable with his low registers, the dashing crooner delivers every song with inspired confidence, and fuses playfulness and propriety—which he demonstrates in the album's top picks: Gordon and Warren's lushly romantic "You'll Never Know" and Hart and Rodgers' "My Funny Valentine."

The new Bublé recording comes with an irresistible VCD, directed by Peter Kagan, that contains live performances (12 songs, five cities) and a glimpse of Michael's life as he deals with impending superstardom.

The one-hour movie captures the singer's flirtatious charisma, idle thoughts (he doesn't want a squeaky clean image, so the feature includes some naughty, but ultimately harmless clips) and his nice-guy sense of humor, as he brings his grandfather's favorite songs back to mainstream pop and live performance.

BUBLÉ. Distinctive renditions of swing music and romantic ballads.



Call them 'Timers'

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

IT is short for "Old-timers," a tag used to describe natural-born Filipinos living in the US for a long time. This is also the name by which Overseas Performing Artists (OPAs), who regularly commute to Japan, are called. I found this out when I visited the recruitment office of actress Marissa Delgado, the first Filipina to grace the pages of Playboy magazine.

Marissa's entertainment and management outfit carries her initials Mardel, which is how her staff and talents fondly call her. She is respected for being a hands-on manager—a warm and sympathetic woman who constantly encourages her employees and suppliers to work hard so that they do not become panhandlers. She is assisted by her daughter Avon, a former Binibining Pilipinas beauty, and son Kevin.

20 years old

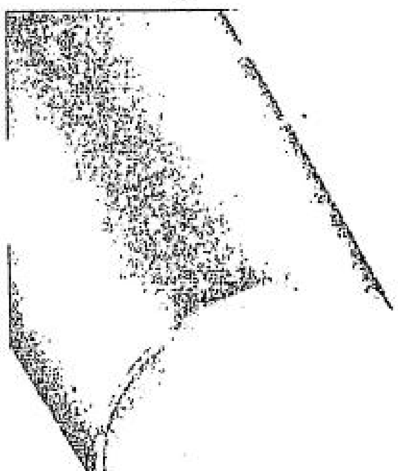
Marissa herself is a "Timer" in the entertainment export industry, her company being almost 20 years old. She also has a number of "Timers" with her, some of them nearly as old as the company, a few already married with children. The "Timers" do not only dance—they also mentor the "newbies," the new recruits, and help guide them through their dance syllabus, their personality and charm classes, and their cultural seminars.

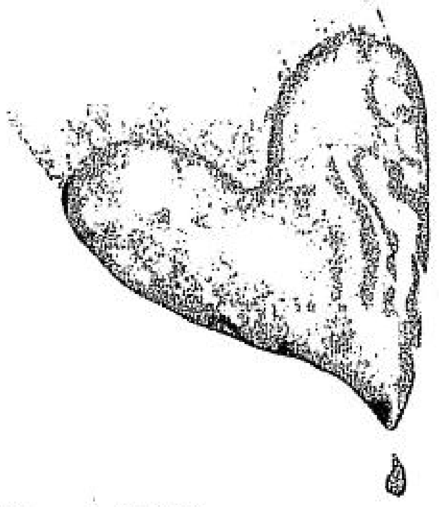
The afternoon I was there, the new talents were preparing for their upcoming test. There was collective flurry and tension, but Mardel was unflappable, a center of calm amidst the impending storm.

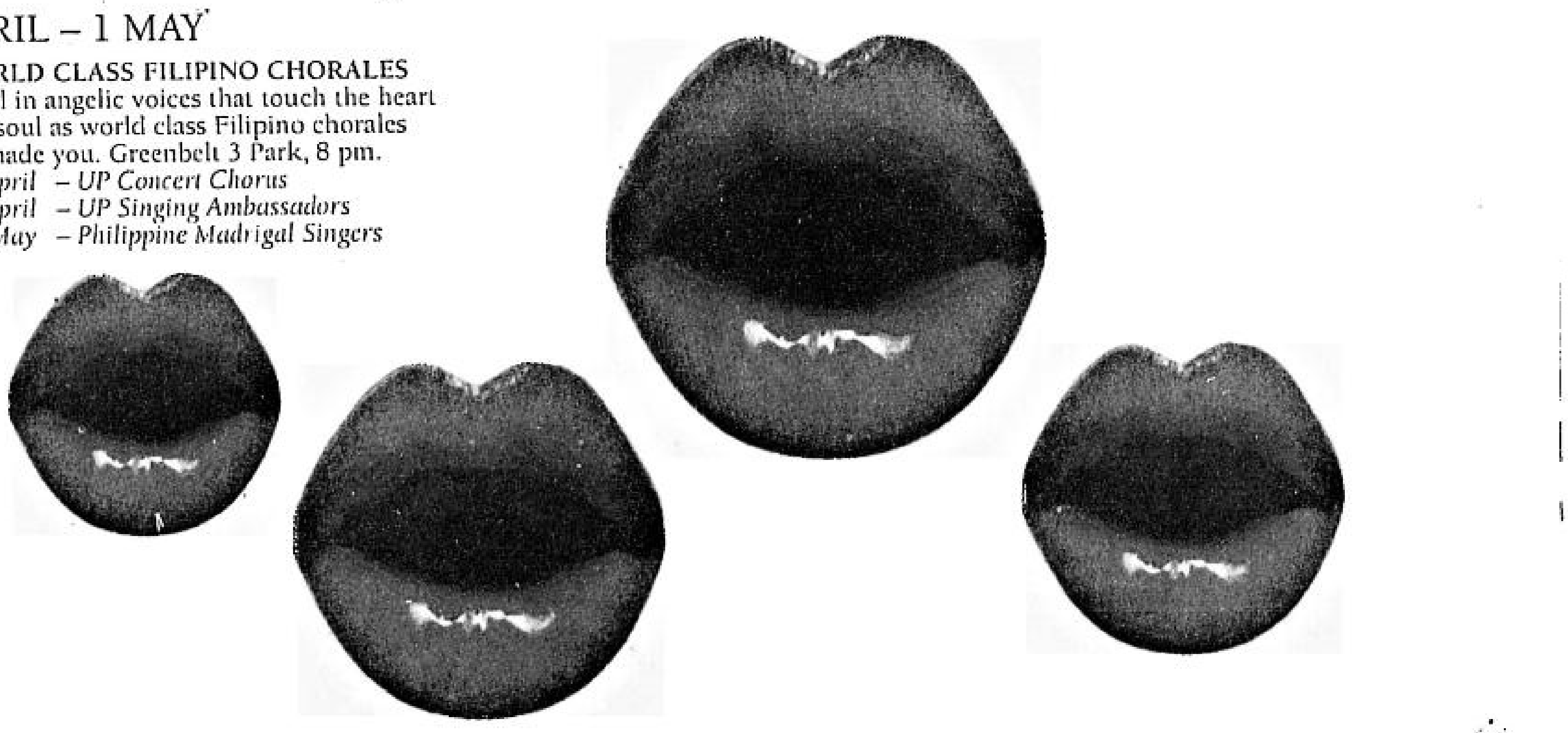
These days, Mardel also offers caregiver training. Looking at the new talents going through their paces, you can say that Mardel, the "Timer," has learned life's lessons well—something that her talents should emulate!

E-mail the author at mn_photocom@i-manila.com.ph or mandynavaseropro@yahoo.com.

DELGADO. Sincerely cares for her talents' welfare.







Affairs of the Arts
A continuing love affair with Filipino creativity.

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- AN AFFAIR WITH THE MASTERS
Let the passion for the arts burn inside you as masters give art workshops.
Angel Cacnio – April 24, 3:30-6:00 pm, Greenbelt 3 Park
Elmer Borlongan, Leslie de Chavez and Ferdie Doctolero – May 1, 3:30-6:00 pm, Greenbelt 4 Park

29 APRIL – 1 MAY
- WORLD CLASS FILIPINO CHORALES
Revel in angelic voices that touch the heart and soul as world class Filipino chorales serenade you. Greenbelt 3 Park, 8 pm.
29 April – UP Concert Chorus
30 April – UP Singing Ambassadors
1 May – Philippine Madrigal Singers

A Tribute to Pinoy Creativity in Celebration of Ayala Corporation's 170th Anniversary
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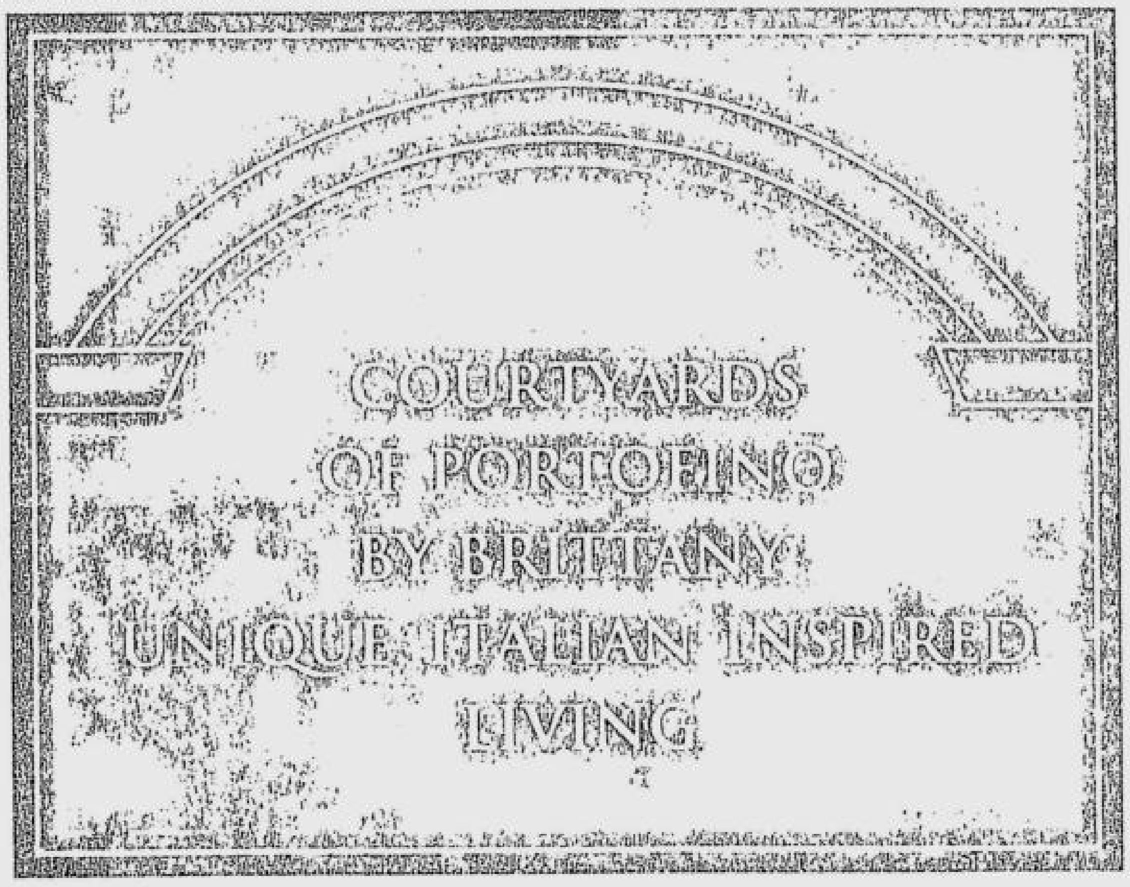
Brittany Corporation's Portofino, the decidedly upscale, Italian-themed, residential and commercial enclave just a few minutes away from the Alabang Town Center, is now building on the success of its first four phases called Portofino Heights, with the next phase of the development offering courtyard residences.

With all lots in Portofino Heights sold out in less than a year, the courtyard units will enable limited numbers of other future residents to partake of a unique way of life that only a thoroughly planned, high-end community from Brittany can offer. The various phases of Portofino, located along the recently opened Las Piñas-Muntinlupa-Laguna-Cavite Link Road, is envisioned for families whose members are citizens of the world, their homes eloquent testimony to an elegant yet comfortable lifestyle.

Portofino by Brittany offers a limited number of Courtyard homes, laid out in a unique design in which each home features a courtyard within a courtyard, a first among residential communities in the country.

Portofino (Italian for "fine gateway") is one of four ongoing developments by Brittany Corporation, the pioneer in envisioning and building high-end, master-planned communities, each inspired by a distinctive theme. Living in Portofino will be evocative of the happy life in sunny Italy, where it is celebrated with exuberance every day. The original Portofino, a lovely seaport town in southern Italy with rolling, hilly terrain, a river and much greenery, is Brittany's inspiration for the multi-phase development project.



Portofino's courtyard homes are a one-of-a-kind application of the courtyard-within-a-courtyard concept, an ingenious design exclusive to Brittany. The concept involves all models each having its own courtyard, while being part of a cluster of homes configured within a bigger courtyard.

Each courtyard home, in the typical Italian fashion of such residences, revolves around a courtyard in the center, with terra cotta and stucco as well as pronounced arches and layers that bring on warm, cheerful feelings. The main foyer allows access to the rooms on the ground level through the courtyard. The windows gracing the balconies permit light from outdoors to enter, while the open space in the center of each villa affords natural cooling against tropical temperatures. Arcades supported by columns, fountains and gardens will accent the soothing view of each courtyard from the halls within. The courtyard space of each home will be perfect for entertaining company or as a private area where family members may simply relax together. Some of the courtyard residences will feature charming *casitas*, rooms on the ground level ideal for staying guests.

Reminiscent of an Italian setting, the Portofino courtyard residences will boast streets of cobblestone and adornments consisting of statues, fountains and benches.

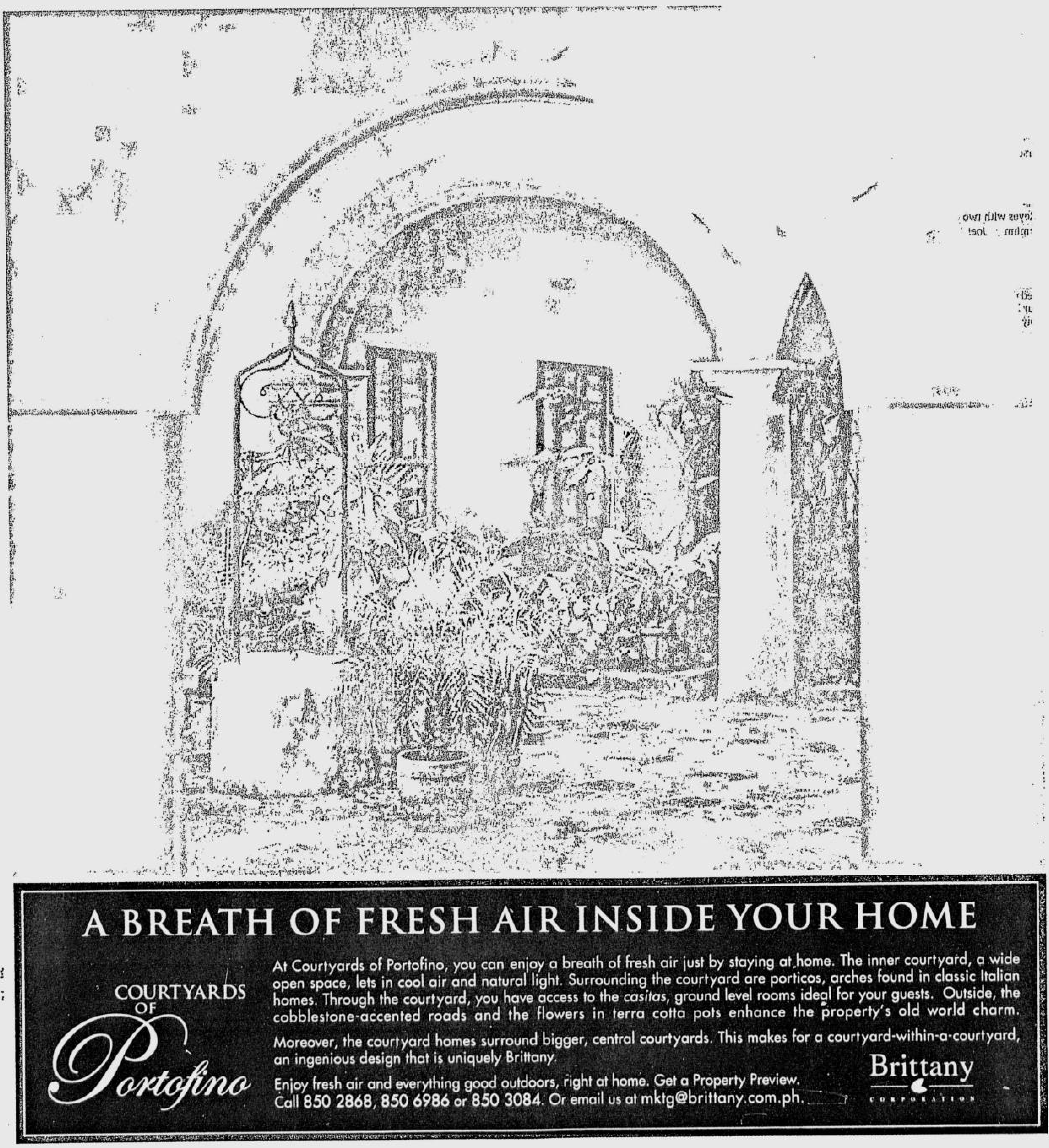
In keeping with Brittany's faithfully observed architectural and other development guidelines to maintain the integrity of each community's theme, the courtyard units at Portofino, clustered in cozy communities, are available in four models. Named after European masters, the models are the Cezanne (floor area 193 sq. m.), the Monet (floor area 233 sq. m.), the Raphael (floor area 247 sq. m.), and the Rembrandt (floor area 260 sq. m.). Selling prices range from Php 7.8 million to Php15 million for home and lot packages.

While adhering to architectural guidelines, Brittany is careful about striking a balance, not impinging on the personal preferences and tastes of residents. Like other Brittany offerings, the courtyard residences of Portofino are meant for families with discerning taste.

Each Courtyard home at Brittany's Portofino is highlighted by an inner courtyard, maximizing use of space as well as natural light and ventilation. The design is inspired by Italian homes that are structured around a courtyard, which "brings the outdoors, indoors" with arcades, benches and fountains.

Each residence will be a jewel, magnificently designed and built, giving the best that life can offer to its happy owner, the lord of his very own manor and proud possessor of a fine home, indeed!

ADVT'L.



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Moreover, the courtyard homes surround bigger, central courtyards. This makes for a courtyard-within-a-courtyard, an ingenious design that is uniquely Brittany.

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SATURDAY Special

AUNOR. First starrer in a long time.

RICKETTS. Back to what he does best.

Nora Aunor, Ronnie Ricketts topbill 2004 Manila filmfest entries

By Nestor U. Torre

BARRING pullouts, replacements or other unforseen changes, the Manila Film Festival this June should be an interesting and varied cinematic event.

Its official entries are "Naglalayag," Nora's first starrer in a long time; "Mano Mano, Arnis: The Lost Art," star-director Ronnie Ricketts' comeback vehicle; "Kulimlim" with Robin Padilla; "Sabel" with Judy Ann Santos, and "Volta" with Ai-Ai delas Alas.

Aside from significant comeback performances and good star value, the festival offers diverse film types—drama, action-drama, sex comedy, fantasy and action-adventure.

Directors

The directors represented are Maryo J. delos Reyes with two entries ("Naglalayag" and "Kulimlim"), Joel Lamangan ("Sabel"), Mac Alejandre ("Liberated 2"), and Wenn Deramas ("Volta").

We're particularly interested in Nora and Ronnie's comeback movies, because we have missed them on the big screen.

Our hope is that Nora will turn in an unarguably memorable performance, to make up for her less-than-excellent portrayals in her past few film outings.

As for Ronnie, we've liked most of the action-drama-comedy films he's directed, and think it's a crying shame that he's been inactive for so long. So, we trust that he will also come up with a superlative comeback production.

In "Volta's" case, its director-star team (Deramas and Ai-Ai delas Alas) is the same tandem that came up with the huge hit, "Ang Tanging Ina." Ai-Ai's follow-up movie failed to match its success, prompting some people to wonder if Ai-Ai was just a one-hit film sensation.

Hitmaking cachet

Well, "Volta" aims to prove that downbeat conclusion wrong, so movie people will be keeping tabs of its box-office showing. If it clicks, Ai-Ai's hitmaking cachet shall have been reestablished. If it does poorly, Ai-Ai would have an even harder time regaining lost ground the next time around.

We join movie people in hoping that this year's Manila filmfest is a success because the local film industry is in dire need of good news.

A colleague has observed that, for the first four months of 2004, Filipino movie producers have shown fewer than 20 films. If the output remains this lean, the industry will produce even fewer movies than it did in 2003, which was already a low point for local movies.

Filipino films definitely need a big boost. It's good to know that, now that the mid-year Manila filmfest is looking so upbeat, we don't have to wait for the yearend Metro Manila Film Festival to add some more films to our annual output.

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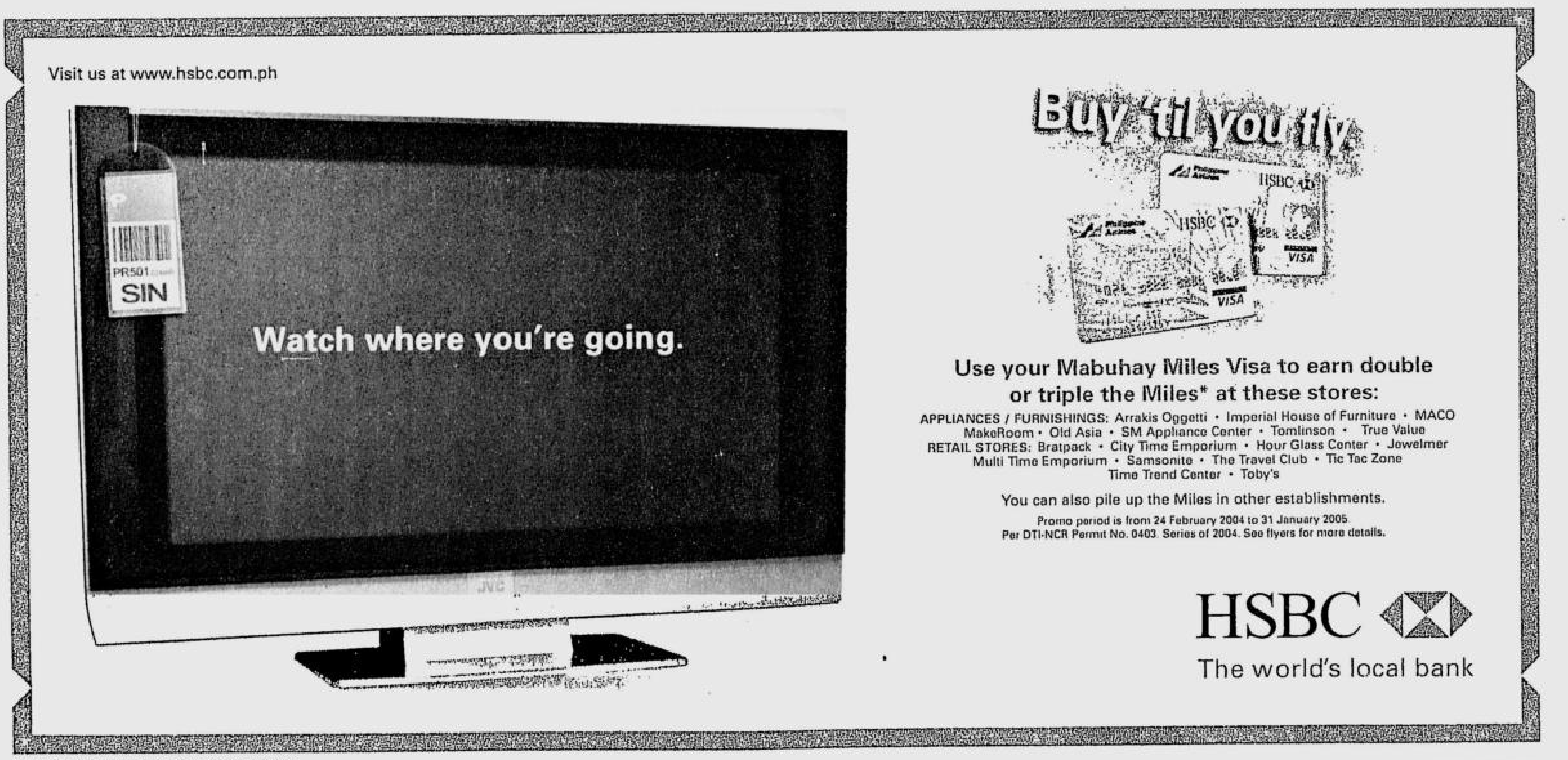

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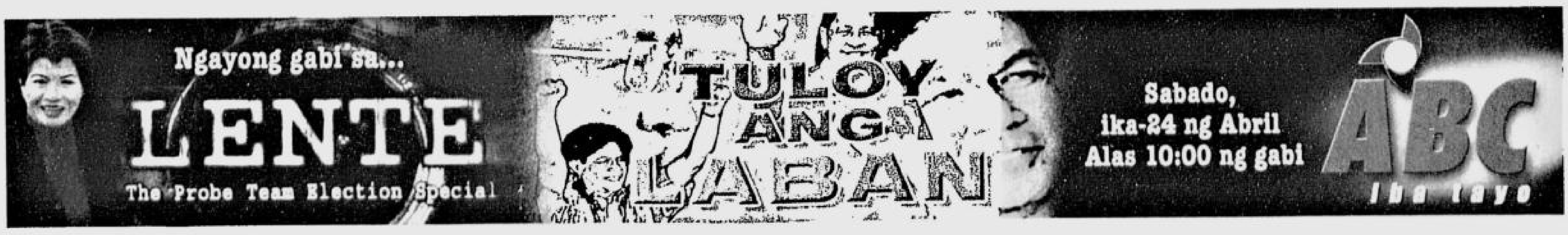

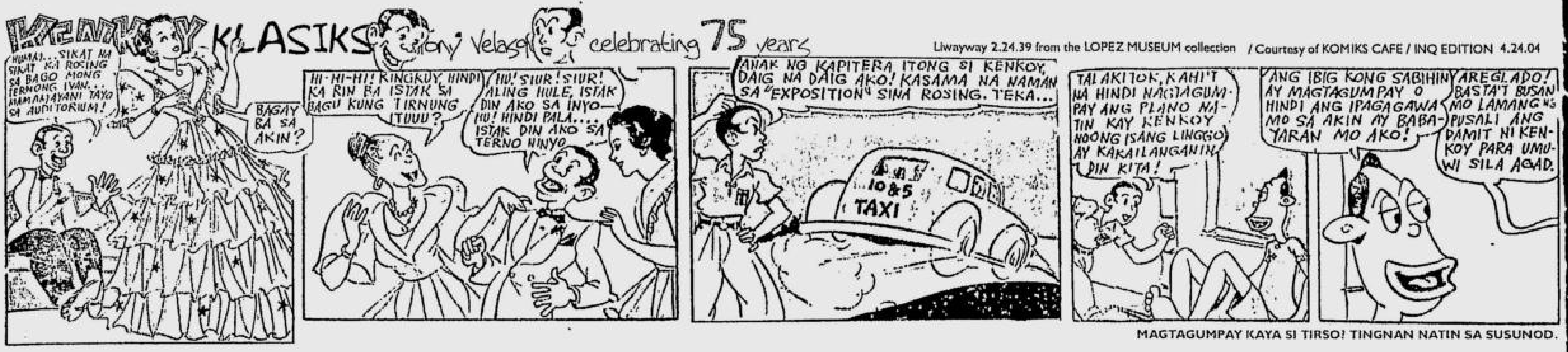
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BAGAY BA SA AKIN?
HI-HI-HI! KINGKOY, HINDI KA RIN BA ISTAK SA BAGU KUNG TIRNUNG ITUUU?
HU! SIUR! SIUR! ALING HULE, ISTAK DIN AKO SA INYO—HU! HINDI PALA... ISTAK DIN AKO SA TERNO NINYO...
ANAK NG KAPITERA ITONG SI KENKOY, DAIG NA DAIG AKO! KASAMA NA NAMAN SA "EXPOSITION" SINA ROSING. TEKA...
10&5 TAXI
TALAKITOK, KAHIT NA HINDI NAGTAGUMPAY ANG PLANO NATIN KAY KENKOY NOONG ISANG LINGGO AY KAKAILANGANIN DIN KITA!
ANG IBIG KONG SABIHIN AY MAGTAGUMPAY O HINDI ANG IPAGAGAWA MO SA AKIN AY BABAYARAN MO AKO!
AREGLADO! BASTA'T BUSAN MO LAMANG NG PUSALI ANG DAMIT NI KENKOY PARA UMUWI SILA AGAD.

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MAGTAGUMPAY KAYA SI TIRSO? TINGNAN NATIN SA SUSUNOD.

Vengeance rules US box office

LOS ANGELES—Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill" saga slayed its movie rivals once again, with part two of the vengeance tale following its predecessor as the country's No. 1 weekend draw.

"Kill Bill, Vol. 2," with Uma Thurman as an ex-assassin continuing her bloody quest for revenge against former colleagues, debuted with $25.6 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

That was up 16 percent from the $22.1 million opening weekend that "Kill Bill, Vol. 1" delivered last October. Part two is expected to match or exceed the $69.9 million domestic total of "Kill Bill, Vol. 1," said Rick Sands, chief operating officer of Miramax.

THURMAN. Bloody quest for revenge.

Adaptation

Another tale of retribution, the comic-book adaptation, "The Punisher," opened in second place with $14 million. The movie stars Thomas Jane as an ex-FBI agent targeting the crime boss (John Travolta) who wiped out his family.

"A very big weekend for revenge," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "Revenge in movies is very cinematic. Everyone lives vicariously through movie characters. People can safely get their revenge fix without actually doing it themselves."

Nia Vardalos, writer and star of the weekend's other big new release, "Connie and Carla," was unable to recapture the box-office magic that made "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" a blockbuster.

"Connie and Carla," about two musical-theater singers posing as men in a drag-queen revue while hiding from mobsters, finished well out of the top 10 with $3.26 million. The movie costars Toni Collette and David Duchovny.

By splitting "Kill Bill" into two parts, Tarantino and Miramax gambled that audiences would be willing to pay twice the ticket price to catch both chapters.

Video release

The risk paid off nicely. The two movies cost a total of $60 million to produce, and "Kill Bill, Vol. 1" alone has grossed $180 million worldwide, with the movie's recent video release selling two million copies in its first day, padding revenues by $40 million more.

"It was a terrific decision, financially," Sands said.

After an Easter surge that lifted it back to the No. 1 spot the previous weekend, "The Passion of the Christ" fell to ninth place with $4.2 million. Since opening on Ash Wednesday, the movie has taken in $360.9 million domestically.

Disney's expensive flop, "The Alamo," came in at No. 10 with $4.05 million in its second weekend. "The Alamo" cost about $140 million to make and market, but has grossed just $16.3 million. *AP*

Simon Cowell tells it like it is

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

FROM *Tina Carolino of Iloilo*: "I love watching 'American Idol' and Simon Cowell. Please write about him."

Simon Cowell is one person many people just love to hate. The 44-year-old "American Idol" judge is a British national who dropped out of school at 16. Before he found success as a music producer with an eye—and ear—for talent, he started as a mail boy at RCA.

As a top music mogul, he is responsible for the success of popular British acts like Westlife, Five, Sonia, Robson and Jerome, and "Pop Idol" (the British equivalent to "AI") winners Will Gates—the beautiful voice behind "Finding Nemo's" "Beyond the Sea"—and Gareth Gates. His musical discoveries have achieved sales exceeding 30 million albums and more than 20 No. 1 singles.

Immense popularity

But, it is really in talent searches ("American Idol," "World Idol," "Pop Idol") where Cowell has found immense popularity—and notoriety—as the so-called "Judge Dread," "Mr. Nasty," and "The Prince of Darkness" who doesn't mince his words.

In his book, "I Don't Mean to be Rude, But...," Simon reveals that he was four years old when he realized the venom of his acerbic tongue. His first victim? His mother—whose white hat he intensely disliked. He told her: "Mom, you look like a poodle!"

COWELL. His marriage lasted for only four months.

Music producer

The 5'9" music producer, who will be paid $10 million in the next three years to continue as a judge on "AI," recently parodied himself as a tough pre-Nursery school admissions officer in an episode of "The Simpsons" where Homer and Marge hope to enroll baby Maggie.

Cowell says he is often asked about his sexuality, but he understands why people think he's gay. He says, "I watch myself on TV, and I do seem gay. But, I *really* am straight!"

He once dated British pop star Sinita (not to be confused with Miquel Brown's daughter, American '80s pop singer Sinitta). —And, he was married to Jeanette Cowell, but that union ended in divorce after only four months!

Some of his most "famous" quotes: "I can honestly say that you're the worst singer in the world!"; "This show is all about finding a star, not feeling sorry for people who aren't very good."; "I think you just killed my favorite song of all time!" "That was extraordinary—extraordinarily bad!"; "If you want to pursue a career in the music business, my advice would be—don't!"; "You sing like Mickey Mouse on helium!"; "You take singing lessons? Do you have a lawyer? Get a lawyer and sue your teacher!"

Recently, though, Cowell delivered his harshest words against his fellow "World Idol" judges: "Every one of these people has based himself on my character. They think it's cool to be me." He lashed out particularly at a Canadian judge: "He's a failed artist who doesn't know what he is talking about!" Ouch!

* * *

Personal note

We would like to thank our Cor Jesu College co-alumnus, Atty. Genevieve Brandares-Paulino of Digos City, for recently assisting our dear mother, Dr. Vinefreda P. Asilo.

Catchy songs illustrate The Darkness' pop sensibilities

By Noelani Torre

WITH all the heavy-duty angst in rock music nowadays, it sometimes comes as a surprise to remember that rock used to preoccupy itself with such an uncool sentiment as having a good time.

We shudder now at the big hair and weird stunts of rock stars of old in classic MTV, and we sure did laugh at Mark Wahlberg's wannabe character in "Rockstar," but those guys did come up with great bits of kick-ass rock and roll.

Yes, it's stadium rock we're talking about here—that notoriously uncool subgenre that most of us have denied ever listening to.

Rock gods

There are those who boldly proclaim their allegiance to these long-haired rock gods, however, and some of them do so by forming bands of their own.

One of the newest is made up of Brit lads who unashamedly hail Freddie Mercury and his ilk as heroes. Calling themselves The Darkness, the band is fronted by vocalist/guitarist Justin with brother Dan on guitar, Frankie Poullain on bass, and Ed Graham on drums.

Our first look at wild-haired, cat-suited frontman Justin Hawkins wasn't very heartening—he looks like a parody of an '80s rock star! We were quite ready to dismiss their music on the same terms.

One can't readily dismiss the band's debut album, however. "Permission to Land" (Must Destroy/Warner) is a tight, 38-minute-long compilation full of surprisingly well-written songs laden with highly infectious pop hooks, throbbing bass lines and chunky guitar riffs.

JUSTIN HAWKINS, front center, and his gang are committed to their music—and having a good time.

We wouldn't call ourselves fans of this particular genre (Radiohead and U2 are more our thing), but we've head-banged and screeched along with Queen and Aerosmith in our time. We must tell you that the guys from The Darkness sound like they really know their thing.

Cocky attitude

They may look and sound like a joke at first, what with their cocky attitude and flamboyant, 20-years-too-late style, but behind that seemingly tongue-in-cheek front lies a sincere enjoyment of the music. This is no band bent on irony or jokes, but one that is committed to the music, having a good time, and ensuring that everybody else does.

They're not shy about acknowledging their influences. Album-opener "Black Shuck," which is about some local Hound of the Baskervilles-esque legend is of the same pseudomystical variety as Spinal Tap's "Stonehenge." Like those old bands they idolize, the group also touches on pseudo-Satanism with lyrics like "Flames licked round the sacred spire" and "A nimbus of blue light surrounds a crimson paw." We found it pretty funny, actually.

Stand-out tracks include "Get Your Hands Off Of My

CATCHY/ D3

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM APRIL 24 - APRIL 29

CH	2	4	5	7	9	13	23	25	29
	6:00 Star in A Million 6:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 8:30 Home Along da Airport 9:00 Victim 9:30 Buttercup 10:30 Kontrobersyal 11:30 "F" 12:00 Sports Unlimited	6:00 National Geographic 7:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 8:00 Search for the 1st Tanduay Billiards Player	4:00 PBA Games 9:00 Sing Galing 10:00 Lente 11:00 ABC Treats	6:00 Starstruck Kids 7:00 Imbestigador 8:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 9:30 Kakabakaba Adventures 10:30 Celebrity Turns 11:30 Master Showman	6:00 Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo 7:00 7 Days 8:00 John Doe 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11:00 PGMA	6:00 Opinyon at Desisyon 7:00 Bitag 7:30 9-Ball Tirador 9:00 Nina 10:00 String of Hearts 11:00 Iyo ang Katarungan	6:00 Baywatch 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 The Amazing Race 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deel	6:00 Agila Reports 6:30 Screen Savers 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Car Guys 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Tanging Ina 9:30 24 10:00 Sunday Family Cinema 11:30 Dong Puno Tonight 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 15th Mitsubishi Lancer Int'l Juniors Tennis Championships 9:00 Go For Gold 11:00 Unlimited Diving	4:00 PBA Games 9:00 *American Music Awards Red Carpet Party and Awards Proper*	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 K! 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office	6:00 Smack Down Wrestling 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 May Puso ang Batas 9:00 Sunday's Big Event 11:00 URRC TV	6:00 Home Shopping Network 7:00 Japan Video Topics 10:00 In this Corner 11:00 MTV Filler 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Sponge Bob 6:30 Mr Bean 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Spin City 8:30 Just Shoot Me 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The West Wing 10:30 Digital Tour 11:00 Crossing Over with John	6:00 Captured 6:30 Fresh Gear 7:00 Convergence 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 New Yankee Workshop 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Ang Iglesia ni Cristo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
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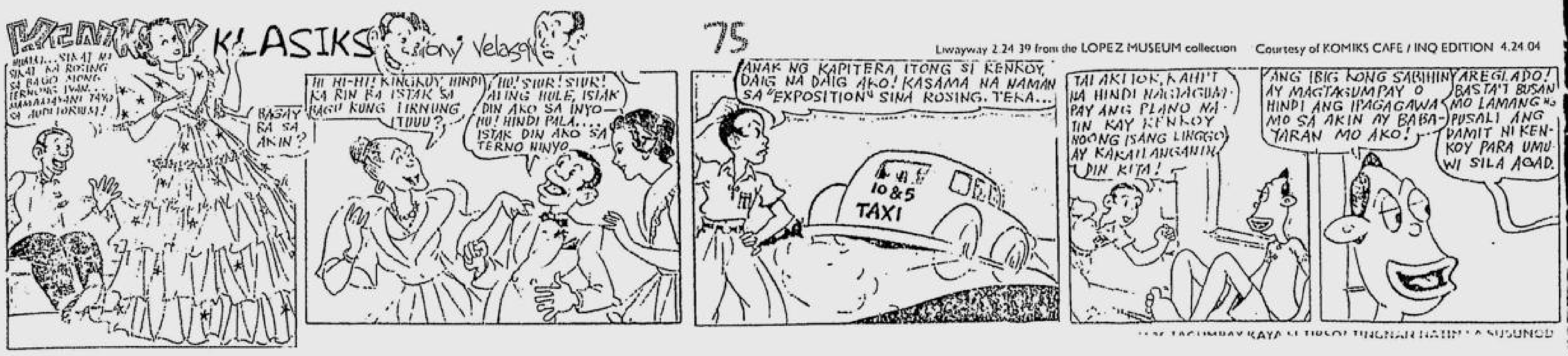
KENKOY KLASIKS
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BAGAY BA SA AKIN?
HI HI-HI! KINGKOY, HINDI KA RIN BA ISTAK SA BAGO KUNG TERNONG TUUU?
HU! SIUR! SIUR! ALING HULE, ISTAK DIN AKO SA INYO—HU! HINDI PALA... ISTAK DIN AKO SA TERNO NINYO.
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AREGLADO! BASTA'T BUSAN MO LAMANG NG PUSALI ANG DAMIT NI KENKOY PARA UMUWI SILA AGAD.

Liwayway 2.24.39 from the LOPEZ MUSEUM collection   Courtesy of KOMIKS CAFE / INQ EDITION 4.24.04

Vengeance rules US box office

LOS ANGELES—Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill" saga slayed its movie rivals once again, with part two of the vengeance tale following its predecessor as the country's No. 1 weekend draw.

"Kill Bill, Vol. 2," with Uma Thurman as an ex-assassin continuing her bloody quest for revenge against former colleagues, debuted with $25.6 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

That was up 16 percent from the $22.1 million opening weekend that "Kill Bill, Vol. 1" delivered last October. Part two is expected to match or exceed the $69.9 million domestic total of "Kill Bill, Vol. 1," said Rick Sands, chief operating officer of Miramax,

Adaptation

Another tale of retribution, the comic-book adaptation, "The Punisher," opened in second place with $14 million. The movie stars Thomas Jane as an ex-FBI agent targeting the crime boss (John Travolta) who wiped out his family.

"A very big weekend for revenge," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "Revenge in movies is very cinematic. Everyone lives vicariously through movie characters. People can safely get their revenge fix without actually doing it themselves."

THURMAN. Bloody quest for revenge.

Nia Vardalos, writer and star of the weekend's other big new release, "Connie and Carla," was unable to recapture the box-office magic that made "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" a blockbuster.

"Connie and Carla," about two musical-theater singers posing as men in a drag-queen revue while hiding from mobsters, finished well out of the top 10 with $3.26 million. The movie co-stars Toni Collette and David Duchovny.

By splitting "Kill Bill" into two parts, Tarantino and Miramax gambled that audiences would be willing to pay twice the ticket price to catch both chapters.

Video release

The risk paid off nicely. The two movies cost a total of $60 million to produce, and "Kill Bill, Vol. 1" alone has grossed $180 million worldwide, with the movie's recent video release selling two million copies in its first day, padding revenues by $40 million more.

"It was a terrific decision, financially," Sands said.

After an Easter surge that lifted it back to the No. 1 spot the previous weekend, "The Passion of the Christ" fell to ninth place with $4.2 million. Since opening on Ash Wednesday, the movie has taken in $360.9 million domestically.

Disney's expensive flop, "The Alamo," came in at No. 10 with $4.05 million in its second weekend. "The Alamo" cost about $140 million to make and market, but has grossed just $16.3 million.

AP

Simon Cowell tells it like it is

Show Biz Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

FROM *Tina Carolino of Iloilo*: "I love watching 'American Idol' and Simon Cowell. Please write about him."

Simon Cowell is one person many people just love to hate. The 44-year-old "American Idol" judge is a British national who dropped out of school at 16. Before he found success as a music producer with an eye—and ear—for talent, he started as a mail boy at RCA.

As a top music mogul, he is responsible for the success of popular British acts like Westlife, Five, Sonia, Robson and Jerome, and "Pop Idol" (the British equivalent to "AI" winners Will Gates—the beautiful voice behind "Finding Nemo's" "Beyond the Sea"—and Gareth Gates. His musical discoveries have achieved sales exceeding 30 million albums and more than 20 No. 1 singles.

Immense popularity

But, it is really in talent searches ("American Idol," "World Idol," "Pop Idol") where Cowell has found immense popularity—and notoriety—as the so-called "Judge Dread," "Mr. Nasty," and "The Prince of Darkness" who doesn't mince his words.

In his book, "I Don't Mean to be Rude, But..." Simon reveals that he was four years old when he realized the venom of his acerbic tongue. His first victim? His mother—whose white hat he intensely disliked. He told her: "Mom, you look like a poodle!"

COWELL. His marriage lasted for only four months.

Music producer

The 5'9" music producer, who will be paid $10 million in the next three years to continue as a judge on "AI," recently parodied himself as a tough pre-Nursery school admissions officer in an episode of "The Simpsons" where Homer and Marge hope to enroll baby Maggie.

Cowell says he is often asked about his sexuality, but he understands why people think he's gay. He says. "I watch myself on TV and I do seem gay. But, I *really* am straight!"

He once dated British pop star Sinita (not to be confused with Miquel Brown's daughter, American '80s pop singer Sinitta). And, he was married to Jeanette Cowell, but that union ended in divorce after only four months!

Some of his most "famous" quotes: "I can honestly say that you're the worst singer in the world!"; "This show is all about finding a star, not feeling sorry for people who aren't very good."; "I think you just killed my favorite song of all time!" "That was extraordinary—extraordinarily bad!"; "If you want to pursue a career in the music business, my advice would be—don't!" "You sing like Mickey Mouse on helium!"; "You take singing lessons? Do you have a lawyer? Get a lawyer and sue your teacher!"

Recently, though, Cowell delivered his harshest words against his fellow "World Idol" judges: "Every one of these people has based himself on my character. They think it's cool to be me." He lashed out particularly at a Canadian judge: "He's a failed artist who doesn't know what he is talking about!" Ouch!

Personal note

We would like to thank our Cor Jesu College co-alumnus, Atty. Genevieve Brandares-Paulino of Digos City, for recently assisting our dear mother, Dr. Vinefreda P. Asilo.

Catchy songs illustrate The Darkness' pop sensibilities.

By Noelani Torre

WITH all the heavy-duty angst in rock music nowadays, it sometimes comes as a surprise to remember that rock used to preoccupy itself with such an uncool sentiment as having a good time.

We shudder now at the big hair and weird stunts of rock stars of old in classic MTV, and we sure did laugh at Mark Wahlberg's wannabe character in "Rockstar," but those guys did come up with great bits of kick-ass rock and roll.

Yes, it's stadium rock we're talking about here—that notoriously uncool subgenre that most of us have denied ever listening to.

Rock gods

There are those who boldly proclaim their allegiance to these long-haired rock gods, however, and some of them do so by forming bands of their own.

One of the newest is made up of Brit lads who unashamedly hail Freddie Mercury and his ilk as heroes. Calling themselves The Darkness, the band is fronted by vocalist/guitarist Justin with brother Dan on guitar, Frankie Poullain on bass, and Ed Graham on drums.

Our first look at wild-haired, cat-suited frontman Justin Hawkins wasn't very heartening—he looks like a parody of an '80s rock star! We were quite ready to dismiss their music on the same terms.

One can't readily dismiss the band's debut album, however. "Permission to Land" (Must Destroy/Warner) is a tight, 38-minute-long compilation full of surprisingly well-written songs laden with highly infectious pop hooks, throbbing bass lines and chunky guitar riffs.

JUSTIN HAWKINS, front center, and his gang are committed to their music—and having a good time.

We wouldn't call ourselves fans of this particular genre (Radiohead and U2 are more our thing), but we've head-banged and screeched along with Queen and Aerosmith in our time. We must tell you that the guys from The Darkness sound like they really know their thing.

Cocky attitude

They may look and sound like a joke at first, what with their cocky attitude and flamboyant, 20-years-too-late style, but behind that seemingly tongue-in-cheek front lies a sincere enjoyment of the music. This is no band bent on irony or jokes, but one that is committed to the music, having a good time, and ensuring that everybody else does.

They're not shy about acknowledging their influences. Album-opener "Black Shuck," which is about some local Hound of the Baskervilles-esque legend is of the same pseudomystical variety as Spinal Tap's "Stonehenge." Like those old bands they idolize, the group also touches on pseudo-Satanism with lyrics like "Flames licked round the sacred spire" and "A nimbus of blue light surrounds a crimson paw." We found it pretty funny, actually.

Stand-out tracks include "Get Your Hands Off Of My

CATCHY D3

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What Gibson's 'The Passion of the Christ' has wrought

By Nestor U. Torre

GIBSON. His faith, not prospects of financial gain, motivated him to make the film.

AS expected, Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" is a big hit locally. As more and more people see the controversial production, reactions are as varied as they are numerous.

One viewer wonders why the film was classified For Adults in the States, but PG-13 here, despite its obviously high level of violence and gore. We can only speculate that the MTRCB felt that the film was so significant and meaningful that it should be viewed by adolescents accompanied by their elders, despite its violent scenes.

Was this a good decision? We invite psychologists to share their informed opinion on the issue.

Emotional blackmail

A colleague describes the film's flagellation and crucifixion scenes as "excessive emotional blackmail," and wishes that more attention had been given to the Resurrection. But this is obviously not Gibson's top priority. He employed the violent assault on Christ to jolt viewers into appreciating in visceral terms the extent and depth of Jesus' love and sacrifice.

A nun wrote us to find out more about Gibson's own spiritual crisis, which motivated him to make the film. We shared our findings (thanks, Rito) in yesterday's *Viewfinder*.

Another viewer opines that the success of Gibson's film can be attributed, not just to its cinematic virtues and the viewing public's thirst for spiritual enlightenment, but also to Gibson's star value and his "canny" handling of the controversy surrounding his production.

In other words, the fact that it was superstar actor-director Gibson who was making the film gave it a special cachet that boosted its box-office appeal, despite producers' decision not to bankroll its production.

And Gibson turned some Jews' protests against the movie into a plus factor, in the sense that the resulting controversy, instead of dooming the production, made many viewers curious about the film.

Controversy

There is an implication here that Gibson "played" the controversy for box-office success, a charge that the filmmaker would vigorously deny. He keeps stressing that his faith, not prospects of financial gain, motivated him to make the film, which established producers deemed too controversial and uncommercial for them to support.

Finally, viewers cite other religious stories that should be filmed: The colorful, complex lives of St. Paul and St. Agustine. The film bios of popular saints like St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Lorenzo Ruiz. And movies on Mary Magdalene and the two thieves.

On the other hand, there are viewers who point out that religious films need not be based on characters and events in the bible, and should in fact have a more contemporary pertinence. And so, to film!

Parts of a whole

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

HAVE you watched a healthy organism— a fruit tree or the human body— grow? It is astounding to see each part function in complete harmony with the whole structure. The individual parts would be quite lost on their own.

Unhealthy environment

We are by nature parts of the Supreme Whole—and yet, we find ourselves in unhealthy and disorganized environments. If we are spiritual parts of the All-Powerful Being, why are we unhappy? The fact is, we are sometimes like the finger or leaf that decides to rebel against serving the whole.

The story of Adam and Eve is the story of our life—we choose the role of "lordship" We want to be masters. This rebelliousness is a disease: "menitis" (me and I-tis). The important consideration—"me."

Symptoms are obvious in behavior and consciousness: "What about me? What about what I want? Let my will be done!"

A child gets what he wants when he throws a tantrum. As he grows older, he learns more ways to get what he wants: bribery, diplomacy, seduction, etc. Ruthless individuals use violence.

Of course, our games don't really work out because we do not qualify for the role. Playing Lord and "being Lord" are two entirely different things.

Failure is manifested in the mess that we create. We find ourselves in pathetic conditions. We live in toxic cities, and crime-infested neighborhoods. Yet, we also arrogantly proclaim, "We can do it!"

Campaign promises

We sound like the false campaign promises that politicians mouth.

When are we going to stop playing Lord? When a person acknowledges his weaknesses, he is led to the path of the Supreme.

In reality, the soul is never disconnected from the Supreme—he is never totally cut off from God. The rebellious soul is still connected to God, but becomes covered by illusions. But a gnawing emptiness in his heart will always bother him.

Only loving service to the Supreme Beloved will make his heart feel complete again.

Email lotuspond108@hotmail.com

Catchy songs illustrate . . .

From page D2

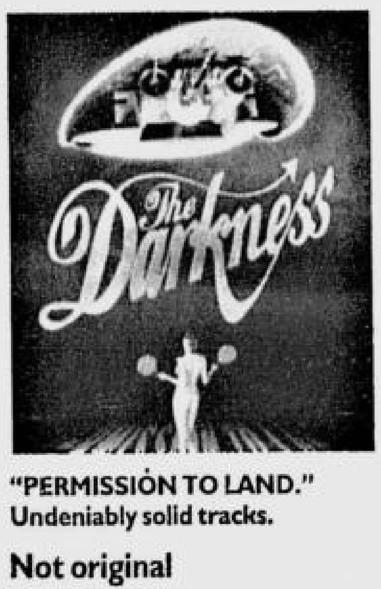
Woman," where Justin lets loose with his now well-known castrati-like falsetto; anthems like "Growing on Me," "I Believe in a Thing Called Love," "Love is Only A Feeling," and the laid-back paean to heroin, "Givin' Up."

Achievement

Considering that this is only a 10-track CD, that means that half of the album is guaranteed good listening. That's quite an achievement for first-timers who still have to struggle to be taken seriously.

In fact, the band's combination of pomp-rock revival and over-the-top performances would have been particularly disastrous if they didn't have such undeniably solid songs to back them up.

Their songs' catchy hooks illustrate the group's heightened pop sensibilities. Coupled with riffs more suited to an arena than to your earphones, it makes for a killer combination that will have you nodding along involuntarily.



"PERMISSION TO LAND." Undeniably solid tracks.

Not original

Sure, they're not original, but that doesn't make them any less enjoyable.

With three Brit Awards under their belts (for best act, best rock act and best album), a quadruple platinum, and a rising standing in the Billboard Chart, The Darkness seems set on its way to rock stardom—proving that sometimes you have to be really uncool to be cool!

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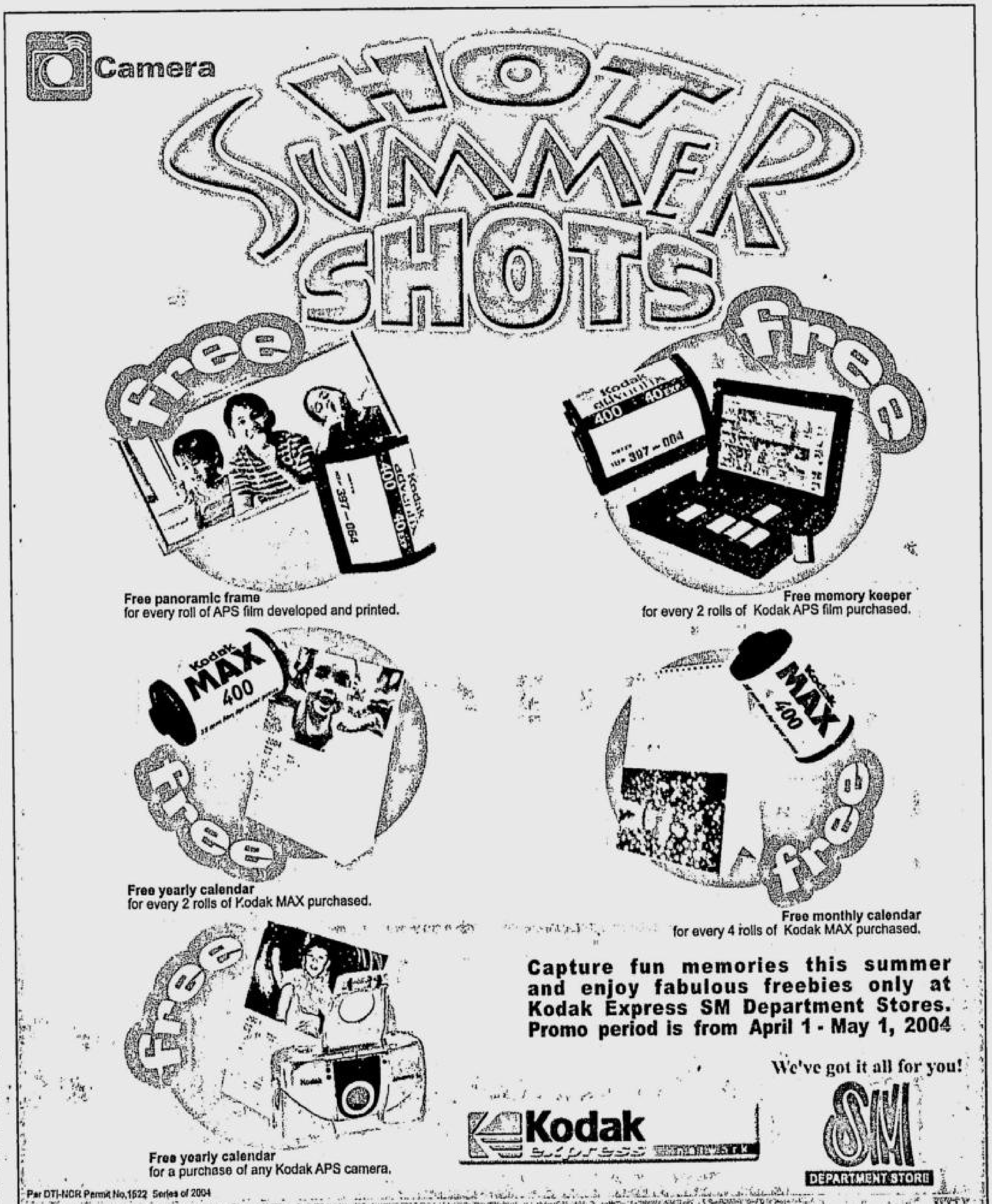

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SATURDAY Special

Karylle discovers the joy of acting

By Jocelyn Valle

AS THEY say, never say never. "Yes," acknowledges Karylle, laughing. "When I was starting out in the biz, I didn't want to act in the movies

KARYLLE/ E3

KARYLLE. It's cool to be somebody else.

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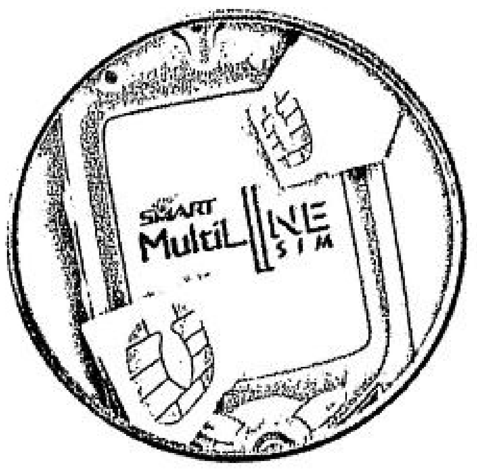
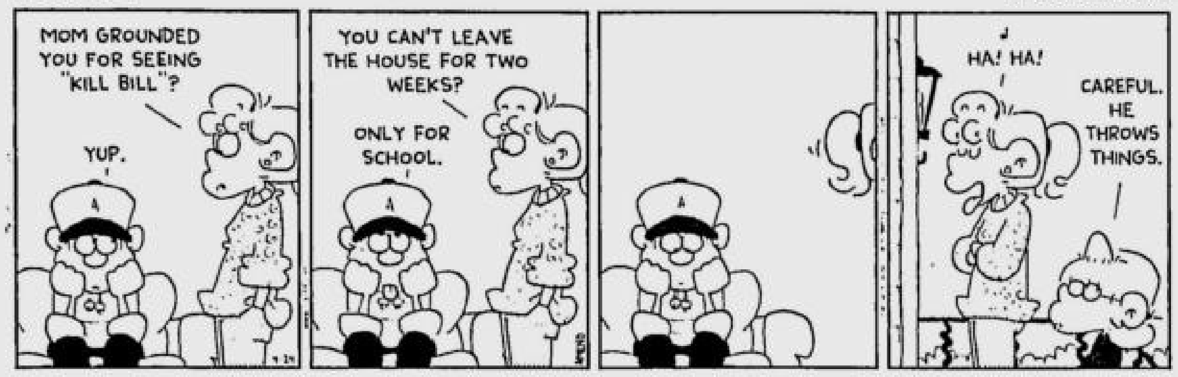
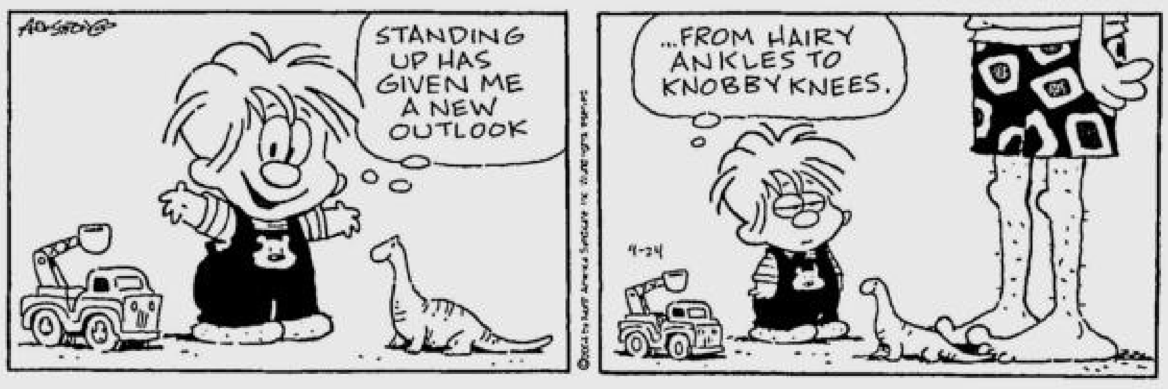


SMART Simply Amazing!

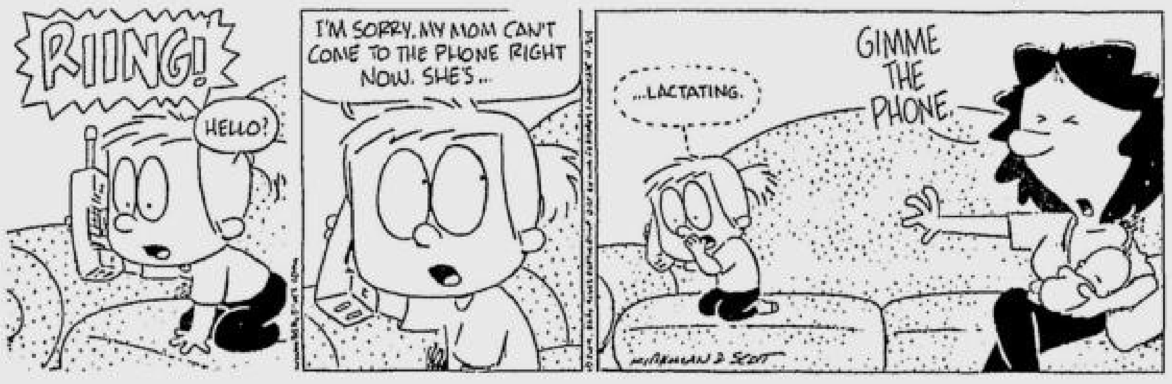
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


MOM GROUNDED YOU FOR SEEING "KILL BILL"?
YUP.
YOU CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE FOR TWO WEEKS?
ONLY FOR SCHOOL.
HA! HA!
CAREFUL. HE THROWS THINGS.

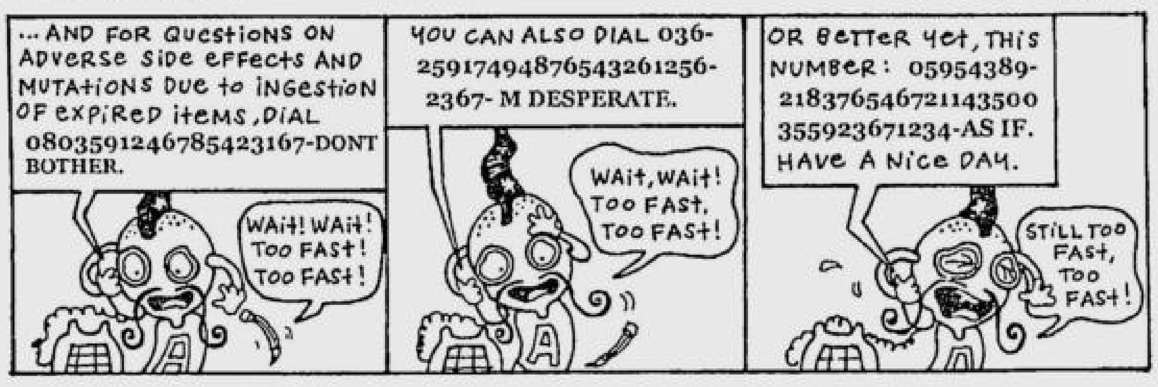
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


STANDING UP HAS GIVEN ME A NEW OUTLOOK
...FROM HAIRY ANKLES TO KNOBBY KNEES.

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


RIING!
HELLO?
I'M SORRY. MY MOM CAN'T COME TO THE PHONE RIGHT NOW. SHE'S...
...LACTATING.
GIMME THE PHONE.

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


...AND FOR QUESTIONS ON ADVERSE SIDE EFFECTS AND MUTATIONS DUE TO INGESTION OF EXPIRED ITEMS, DIAL 0803591246785423167-DONT BOTHER.
WAIT! WAIT! TOO FAST! TOO FAST!
YOU CAN ALSO DIAL 036-25917494876543261256-2367- M DESPERATE.
WAIT, WAIT! TOO FAST, TOO FAST!
OR BETTER YET, THIS NUMBER: 05954389-218376546721143500355923671234-AS IF. HAVE A NICE DAY.
STILL TOO FAST, TOO FAST!

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are nurturing and protective to your loved ones. Personally, however, you always explore the mysteries of life and are willing to push the sides of the envelope. You are highly expressive, but you need an appreciative audience. You also need a stable home environment. Increased solitude in the year ahead is necessary to learn something important.

Birthdate of: Eric Bogosian, actor; Barbra Streisand, singer/actress; Shirley MacLaine, actress/dancer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You have lots of mental energy today. You're raring to go! Make the best use of this feeling, and try to do as much as you can. Good luck!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're determined to buy something today. Whatever it is makes you feel better about yourself. Perhaps it's something you will be really proud of. (You deserve the best.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Any kind of physical activity or exercise will be beneficial for you today. You're energized, excited and eager to do things. Go outdoors and do a little huffing and puffing.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your inner confidence is quite strong today. This is excellent, because it will help you initiate things and take advantage of opportunities that come your way.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a wonderful day for group activities. Group sports, club functions and pleasant times with friends definitely please you now. Go forth and be social!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Choose today to dig for answers to puzzling questions. You're unusually tenacious and persistent in going after whatever you want to find out. Research financial matters connected with shared holdings.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You'll find it very easy to convince somebody of something today. That's because you believe in what you say now. You're behind every word that comes out of your mouth.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You'll find it easy to work hard at any task today. Your mental concentration is fabulous! However, you're best off working alone because you want to do things your own way.

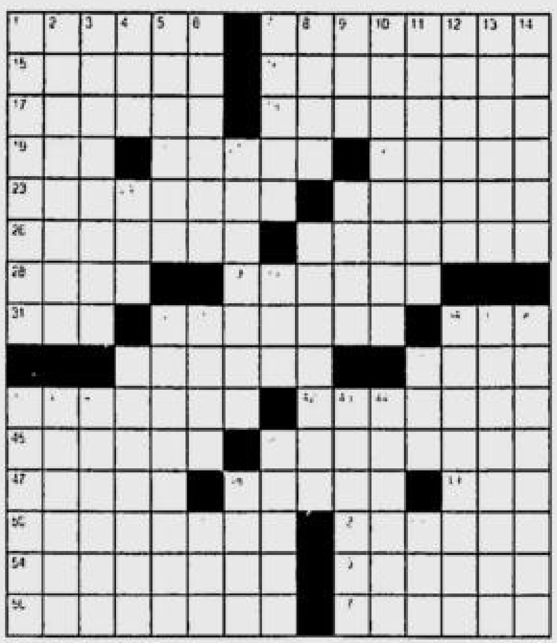
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Mental games and prankish times are tops on your menu today. A little flirtation appeals to you as well. (You feel like a kid again.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a great day to tackle home repairs or discuss domestic problems. You probably want others to do things your way. (It's up to you to persuade them.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're full of bright ideas today! Your mind is clicking along a mile a minute. Enjoy playful activities with children. Short trips will also please.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're full of moneymaking ideas today. Everything having to do with cash flow is favored. Whether you're earning money or spending it, you're on top of your game.

DAILY CROSSWORD

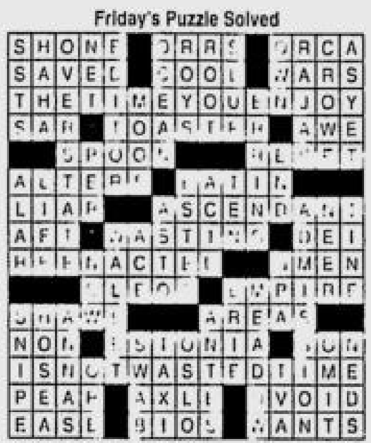


By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH
4/24/04

ACROSS
1 Macintosh computers
7 Central part of the brain
15 Severe
16 Geological epoch
17 Assuage
18 Establish in a new place
19 Emma's twins?
20 Nabisco favorites
22 Plant of the orpine family
23 Wisdom
25 Made over
26 Saw-tooth ranges
27 Strengthened
28 "__ upon a midnight dreary..."
29 Swarmed
31 Soak flax
32 Strutted like spirited horses
34 Prohibition
37 La __, WI
38 Biblical weed
39 Total lack of ideas
42 Makes seawater drinkable
45 Strongly opposed
46 Occurring at regular intervals
47 Legendary king of Phrygia
48 Seine tributary
49 Air pressure meas
50 Militant supporter
52 All one's assets and liabilities
54 Whiten a plant by excluding light
55 _ Island, NY
56 Breaks a code
57 Most docile

DOWN
1 Evaluator
2 Food poisoning
3 Likely candidate
4 Ignited
5 Repeater
6 Breastbones
7 Paroxysm
8 Weeders' tools
9 Still and _
10 Untied
11 Gave one's consent
12 Pasture or hayfield
13 Discompose
14 Appeared
21 Rapture
24 Wrath
25 "The __ of the Ancient Mariner"
27 Confederate state
30 Annapolis grad
32 In an affectedly prim manner
33 Learning method
34 Hairless crown
35 Pretentious people
36 Ignorant
37 Museum employee
38 Oriental spiritual way
39 Improvised
40 Pilot an aircraft
41 Hardwicke or Pioline
43 Actor Borgnine
44 Guadalajara snooze
46 Window segments
48 Damon or Dillon
51 Dolt
53 Scottish topper

Friday's Puzzle Solved



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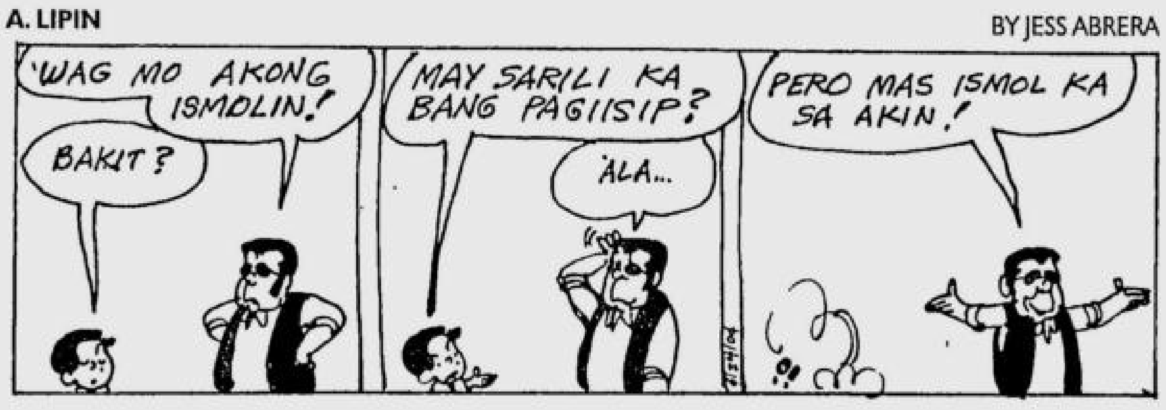
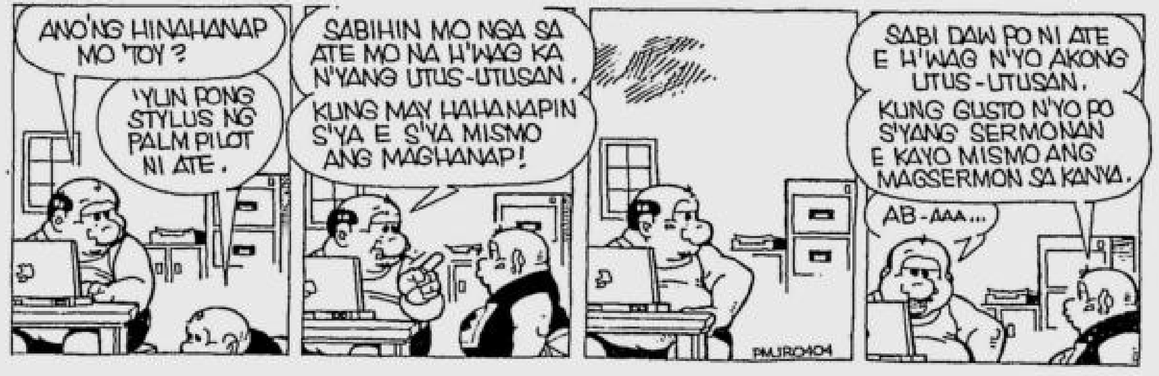
4/24/04

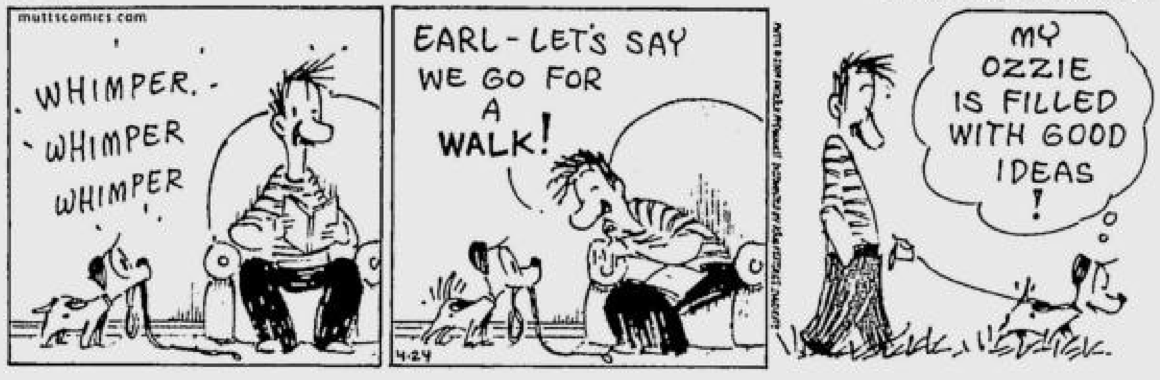
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


'WAG MO AKONG ISMOLIN!
BAKIT?
MAY SARILI KA BANG PAGIISIP?
ALA...
PERO MAS ISMOL KA SA AKIN!

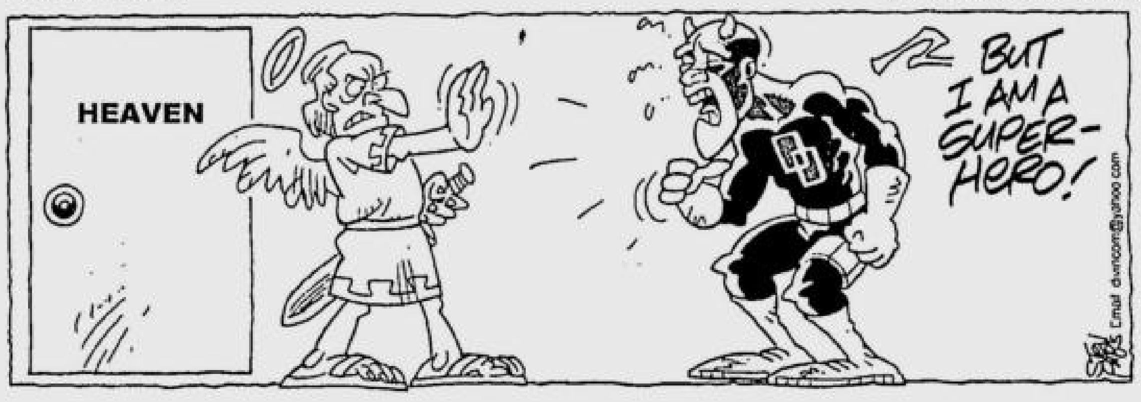
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANO'NG HINAHANAP MO 'TOY?
'YUN PONG STYLUS NG PALM PILOT NI ATE.
SABIHIN MO NGA SA ATE MO NA H'WAG KA N'YANG UTUS-UTUSAN.
KUNG MAY HAHANAPIN S'YA E S'YA MISMO ANG MAGHANAP!
SABI DAW PO NI ATE E H'WAG N'YO AKONG UTUS-UTUSAN.
KUNG GUSTO N'YO PO S'YANG SERMONAN E KAYO MISMO ANG MAGSERMON SA KANYA.
AB-AAA...

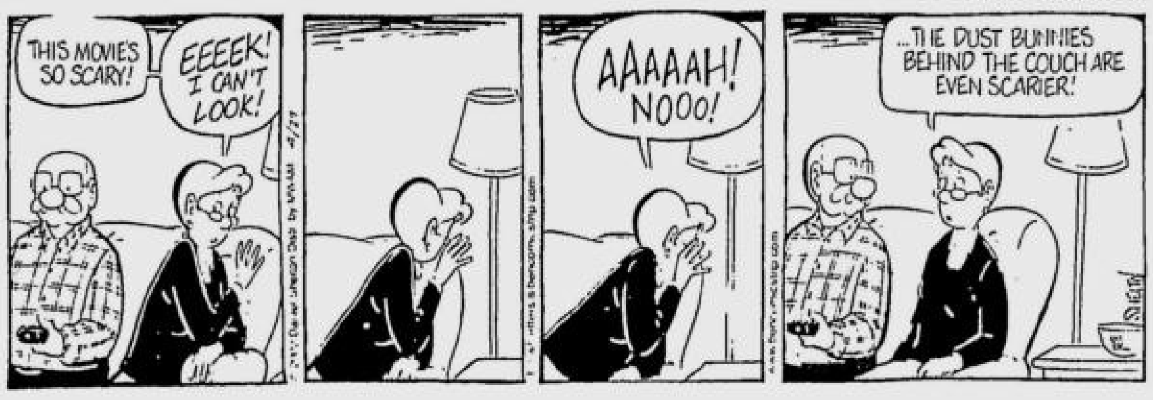
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


muttscomics.com
WHIMPER. WHIMPER WHIMPER
EARL - LET'S SAY WE GO FOR A WALK!
MY OZZIE IS FILLED WITH GOOD IDEAS!

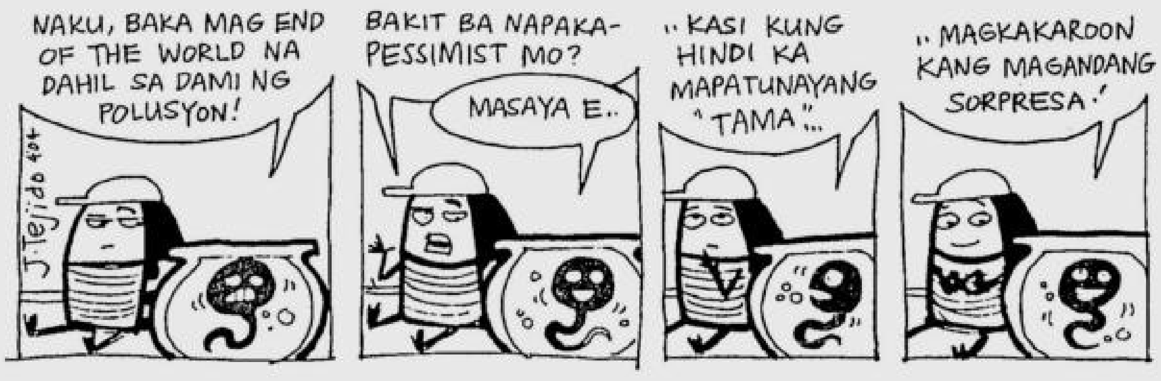
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HEAVEN
BUT I AM A SUPER-HERO!

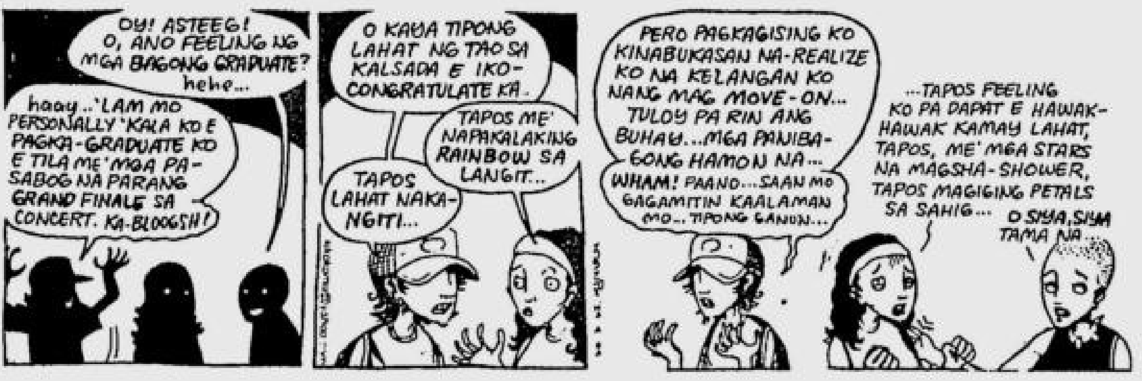
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


THIS MOVIE'S SO SCARY!
EEEEK! I CAN'T LOOK!
AAAAAH! NOOO!
...THE DUST BUNNIES BEHIND THE COUCH ARE EVEN SCARIER!

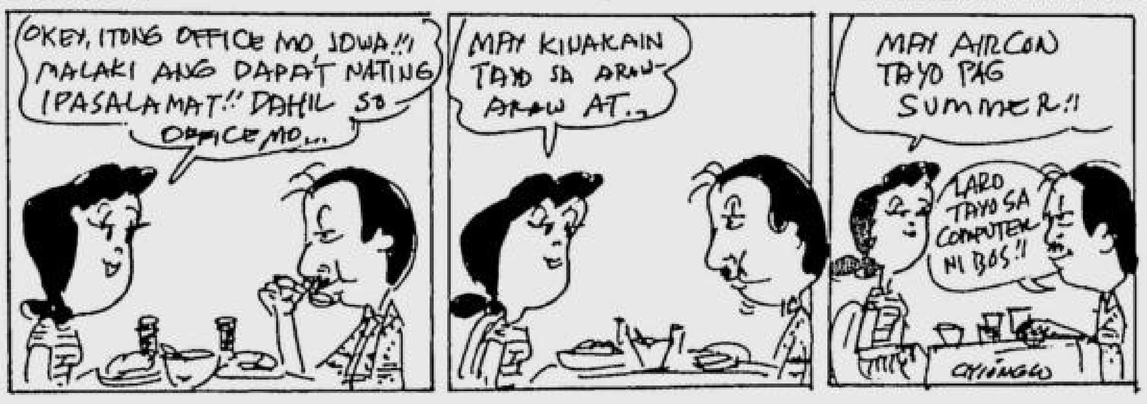
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKU, BAKA MAG END OF THE WORLD NA DAHIL SA DAMI NG POLUSYON!
BAKIT BA NAPAKA-PESSIMIST MO?
MASAYA E..
..KASI KUNG HINDI KA MAPATUNAYANG "TAMA"...
..MAGKAKAROON KANG MAGANDANG SORPRESA!
J. Tejido

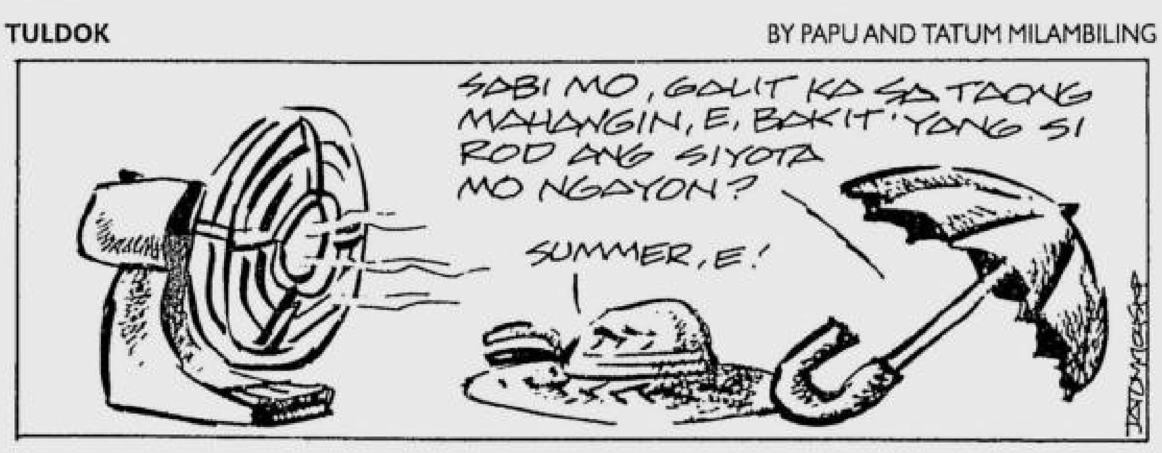
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


OY! ASTEEG! O, ANO FEELING NG MGA BAGONG GRADUATE? hehe...
haay..'LAM MO PERSONALLY 'KALA KO E PAGKA-GRADUATE KO E TILA ME' MGA PASABOG NA PARANG GRAND FINALE SA CONCERT. KA-BLOOGSH!
O KAYA TIPONG LAHAT NG TAO SA KALSADA E IKO-CONGRATULATE KA.
TAPOS LAHAT NAKANGITI...
TAPOS ME' NAPAKALAKING RAINBOW SA LANGIT...
PERO PAGKAGISING KO KINABUKASAN NA-REALIZE KO NA KELANGAN KO NANG MAG MOVE-ON... TULOY PA RIN ANG BUHAY...MGA PANIBAGONG HAMON NA... WHAM! PAANO...SAAN MO GAGAMITIN KAALAMAN MO... TIPONG GANUN...
...TAPOS FEELING KO PA DAPAT E HAWAK-HAWAK KAMAY LAHAT, TAPOS, ME' MGA STARS NA MAGSHA-SHOWER, TAPOS MAGIGING PETALS SA SAHIG...
O SIYA, SIYA TAMA NA.

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


OKEY, ITONG OFFICE MO IDWA!! MALAKI ANG DAPAT NATING IPASALAMAT!! DAHIL SA OFFICE MO...
MAY KINAKAIN TAYO SA ARAW-ARAW AT...
MAY AIRCON TAYO PAG SUMMER!!
LARO TAYO SA COMPUTER NI BOS!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SABI MO, GALIT KA SA TAONG MAHANGIN, E, BAKIT 'YONG SI ROD ANG SIYOTA MO NGAYON?
SUMMER, E!

The senator's wife is a gifted musician

By Andy Bais

ASIDE from being Sen. Nene Pimentel's wife, Lourdes Pimentel, known as Bing to friends, is also a gifted musician. In fact, five musical productions have already been mounted featuring her original compositions—one of them is the long-running "Nasaan si Hesus?," a musical revue on the difficulties of being a Christian.

Another production, "Huwag Pumayag sa Dagdag Bawas," bats for electoral reforms. It was thought up when her husband was cheated of victory in the 1995 senatorial race.

Compositions

When asked about her gift for composing songs, she recalls: "When I was young, my mother would knock on our door. *Ako naman, nasa likod ng pinto, nagtatago.* When the door opened, my mother would announce, 'Ready *na, kanta na!'* And I would sing my compositions!"

She comes from a musical family. Her grandmother was a good singer, her grandfather a violinist. "I took piano lessons as a child. *Kaya lang, sa dami namin,* I had to stop," she explains.

"Some of my songs have not been arranged yet, while a few are still playing in my head. *Sabihin mo lang sa akin na magcompose ako*, and I will," she shares.

Where does she get the inspiration to write songs? "From anything that moves me emotionally."

Old couple

Her song, "Magic to My Heart" was inspired by an old couple walking in a park with so much love for each other. "*Nakita ko silang kumain ng* ice cream from one cone. It was so romantic! Immediately, the music and lyrics just poured out of me. I had to keep singing the song over and over, *kasi baka makalimutan ko*—I didn't have a tape recorder then," she laughs.

"Hinahanap-hanap Kita," composed 44 years ago, was the first song that she wrote for Pimentel. "I was a teacher in Bukidnon and Nene was in Manila reviewing for the bar exams," she shares.

When the senator was in prison, her output was naturally made up of sad songs. She also composed music for her husband's poem, "Sa Bicutan, W'ay Bayani."

Regular fixture

One of her latest compositions, "If I Could Only Stop Time," was composed for her sick brother in the States. It will be recorded by balladeer Bimbo Cerrudo, who has become a regular fixture in her musical productions.

Says Bimbo of *Tita* Bing's music: "She writes wholesome and endearing melodies. She's not influenced by contemporary formulas. She has her own style, sometimes haunting, and often heartwarming."

Indeed, Bimbo knows whereof he speaks. In "Nasaan..." where he takes on the demanding role of a priest who has doubts about his faith, he shines brightly when he performs the powerful song. "Nasaan" will be performed again this July at the UP Film Center theater.

Sen. Pimentel, according to Bing, is supportive of what she does because he respects her individuality. "Now, I have more time for my music. *Malalaki na ang mga anak namin.* I'm reaping the rewards of my sacrifice, " she shares.

MRS. LOURDES "Bing" Pimentel, shown here with Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel, writes songs about anything that moves her emotionally.

Karylle discovers . . .

From page E1

or on TV."

Karylle always felt that acting wasn't her thing. "Maybe, it's because I didn't know myself when I was starting out," she offers. "Whenever I would do skits in school, I'd feel very awkward. I felt out of place."

She found the answer in a creativity workshop with Apo member Jim Paredes. "We were trying to unlock our fears, and acting was one of them," she recalls. "I discovered why I didn't even want to try. I didn't want people to insult or criticize me. I had a feeling that I could not act at all."

Karylle accepted the offer to join "Twin Hearts" because her character, Iris, would appear for only a week. She would die early in the story. When the stint ended, she sorely missed acting. Luckily, the production asked her to come back on the show to play another character, Jade, who looks exactly like Iris.

"To be somebody else" is what draws Karylle to acting. "'*Di ba*, sometimes it gets tiring being yourself? It's cool to be somebody else from time to time—to be as carefree as Jade."

More comfortable

She has learned to be more comfortable with herself, too. "It makes me not think too much about how I look," adding that her new calling has made her closer to her grandfather, Carlos Padilla Jr., the former international boxing referee.

During her recent trip to the US, where her grandparents are based, Karylle brought videotapes of "Twin Hearts."

"He was so proud of me," she says recalls her grandfather's reaction. "*Ang sarap ng feeling!*"

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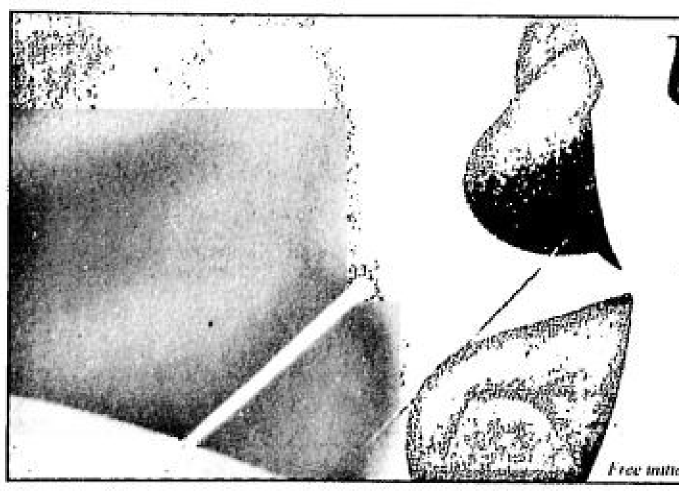

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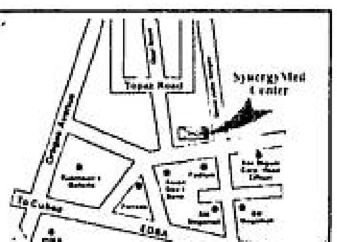

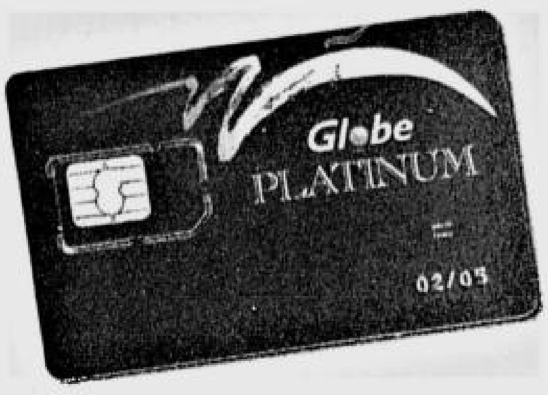

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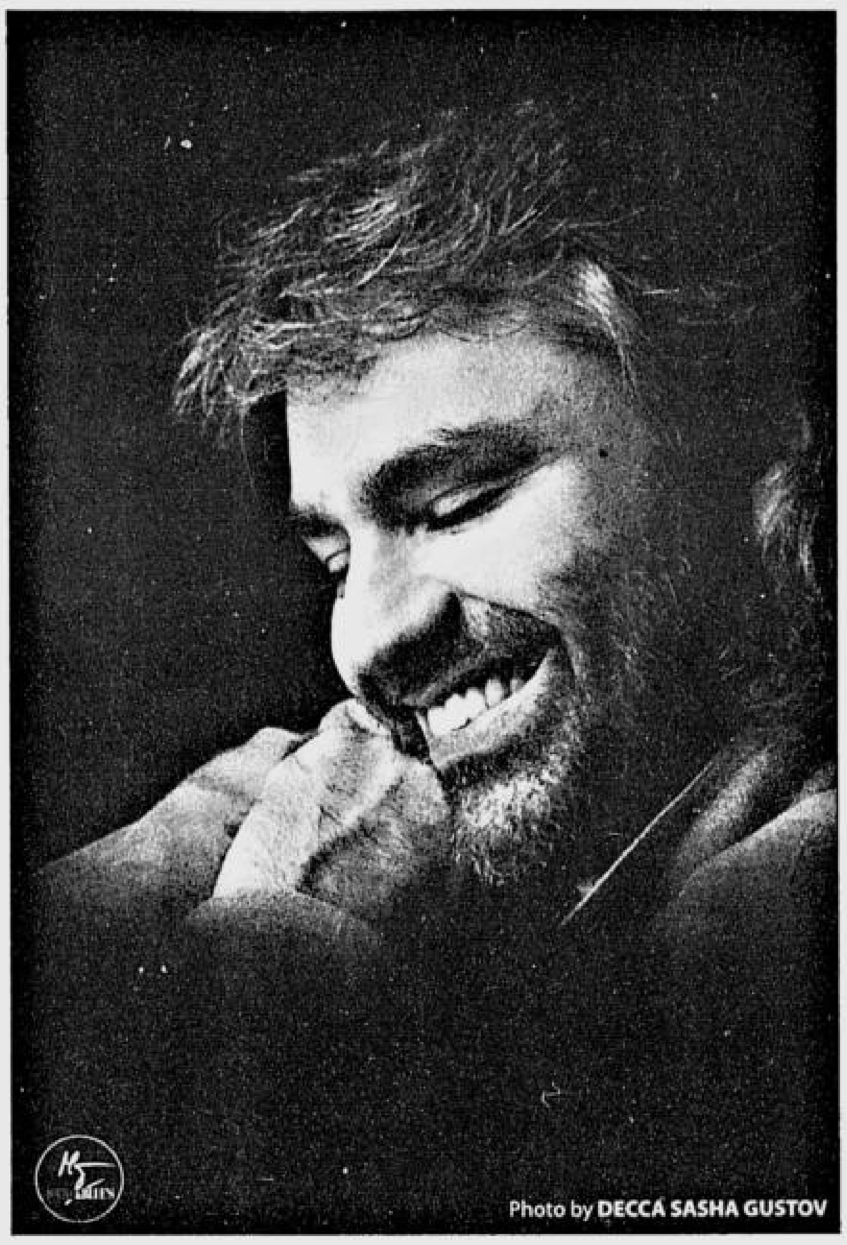
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1698, Series of 2004.

Titles	Keywords
O' Mare E tu	*OMareEt*
Sogno (Dream)	*Sogno*
E Sara ' settlement (Someone like you)	*ESara*
Miserere (live)	*Miserere*
Il Mistero Deli' Amore	*IlMistero*
Ave Maria	*Ave Maria*
Core n' Grato	*CorenGrato*
Il diavolo El' Angelo	*ILDiavolo*

Complete Mechanics for Globe Platinum Members:
1. Promo is open to all current Globe Platinum members.
2. Members must present their Globe Platinum card to receive a 25% discount on purchase of Andrea Bocelli Live in Manila concert tickets at the Lobby Shop of the Mandarin Oriental Manila. A maximum of four tickets can be purchased per Platinum member. The Andrea Bocelli Live in Manila concert will be on April 30, 2004 at the Araneta Coliseum. Concert ticket prices are P25,000, P20,000, P15,000, P10,000, P5,000.
3. Promo is valid from April 7-25, 2004.
4. Members who purchase discounted tickets are also entitled to a chance to win two "VIP seat" tickets and two passes to a post-concert dinner with Andrea Bocelli. There will only be one winner. Each concert ticket purchased under the discount promo is entitled to one electronic raffle entry.
5. Draw will be at 4/F Globe Telecom Plaza Tower 2, Madison St. cor. Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City on April 27 using an electronic randomizer containing the Handyphone numbers of the qualified Globe Platinum members. Globe Promo officials and DTI representative shall be present during the draw.
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1766, Series of 2004.

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SATURDAY Special

Young talents shine in new starrers

By Nestor U. Torre

FANS of the Harry Potter film franchise are looking forward to the imminent release of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." What's the series' third installment about?

Its story begins before Harry's third year at Hogwarts. He has to go on the run after an incident where he is unable to control his anger.

Prisoner

Getting on a bus, he hears about Sirius Black, a renegade wizard who was a prisoner at Azkaban. What Harry doesn't realize is that Black escaped to look for him!

(Legend has it that Black was responsible for leading Lord Voldemort to Harry's parents, and for their subsequent deaths. He is now determined to kill Harry, too!)

To make matters worse, Hogwarts is playing host to the terrifying Dementors, who suck the souls from their prey. Unfortunately for Harry, they seem inexplicably drawn to him.

They render Harry virtually helpless until Prof. Lupin trains him to use the Patronus Charm to shield himself from the Dementors' paralyzing effects.

Harry (played again by Daniel Radcliffe) will also try to make sense of his friend Hermione's puzzling disappearances, and the giant Hagrid, who is now the Care of Magical Creatures teacher at Hogwarts.

Bodyguard

Meanwhile, in his latest starrer, "Man on Fire," Denzel Washington plays a burned-out CIA assassin who is hired as the bodyguard of a nine-year-old girl (Dakota Fanning) in Mexico City.

Despite the bodyguard's best efforts, the girl is kidnapped, and he is seriously wounded while unsuccessfully protecting her. But he doesn't rest until he's gotten his young ward back.

Washington was drawn to his role in the film because "he is a lost soul who no longer has the ability to love—but, through this little girl, he finds himself and reconnects with his soul and life."

In Disney Pictures' new family drama, "Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen," Lindsay Lohan plays a New York doll who despairs when she's uprooted and plunked down in the "cultural wasteland" of New Jersey.

Adam Garcia plays the lead singer of her favorite rock band, While Eli Marienthal is cast as the campus hero who becomes infatuated with Lohan's character.

Garcia first made his thespic mark in "Bootmen" and "Coyote Ugly." More than just a pretty, sexy face, he's an accomplished singer, dancer and stage musical star. For his part, Marienthal is a relative newcomer who's both charismatic and a serious actor. Together, they give Lohan's character more than she bargained for!

FANNING. Shares lead billing with Denzel Washington.

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NOW SHOWING

Surprisingly charming film adaptation of cult favorite

By Rito P. Asilo

KILMER. Plays Mamet's protagonist.

"Hellboy"
D: Guillermo del Toro
S: Ron Perlman, Selma Blair

Mike Mignola's Dark Horse cult favorite finds an appropriate director in Del Toro ("Blade 2"), who delivers a surprisingly charming cinematic adaptation that is as funny as it is absorbing and touching. A baby demon (Perlman) is snatched by the Allied forces led by Professor Bruttenholm (John Hurt), US President Roosevelt's psychic adviser, from an evil portal conjured up by some desperate Nazi soldiers in the final days of World War II.

Sixty years later, he is a seven-foot, cigar-chomping, tail-twitching red demon with stumped horns who falls head-over-heels in love with the pyrokinetic Liz Sherman (Blair). Despite an appearance that says otherwise, Hellboy champions the cause of good over evil, and is a loving son to the cancer-stricken professor. Light-hearted, vibrant and CGI-laden, the film may have some lapses, but winning performances and tight editing keep the unlikely story engaging.

"Imagining Argentina"
D: Christopher Hampton
S: Antonio Banderas, Emma Thompson

Hampton's film is solid proof that earnest performances don't a good movie make. Using the political horror of the martial law dictatorship of Argentina from 1976 to 1983 as backdrop, there's so much about the story that would easily have made it compelling—and very familiar.

Banderas plays a theater director whose life is turned upside down when his outspoken journalist wife (Thompson) is abducted, tortured and raped by government agents. His daughter and friends follow when, in his search for answers, he stumbles onto clues that lead all the way up to Casa Rosada, the presidential residence.

Problem is, he finds all his answers through clairvoyance and mysticism—a plot point that had critics booing and walking out of its screening at last year's Venice filmfest. But more than the plot's implausibilities, the powerful performances are dragged down by distracting, hilariously delivered accents: The intense Thompson, who plays a Spanish wife, valiantly tries to hide her distinctly British accent—but fails miserably.

"Check-Inn"
D: Neal Tan
S: Kuhdet Honasan, Rose Valencia

Not as bad as we feared it would be, Tan's technically crude film (cheesy music, unsynchronized dubbing, badly coached supporting actors, voice-overs that could rival any book on famous quotations and idioms) confronts some valid social issues presented in scenes that are "conveniently" littered with breast-and-bun exposure.

It examines the lives of the people who inhabit a hostel: front desk personnel, trick-trading customers (billed in the credits as "the costumers") moralizing employers, sycophantic pay-for-play habitues, miscreants who add side stories to the movie's running time, as well as a

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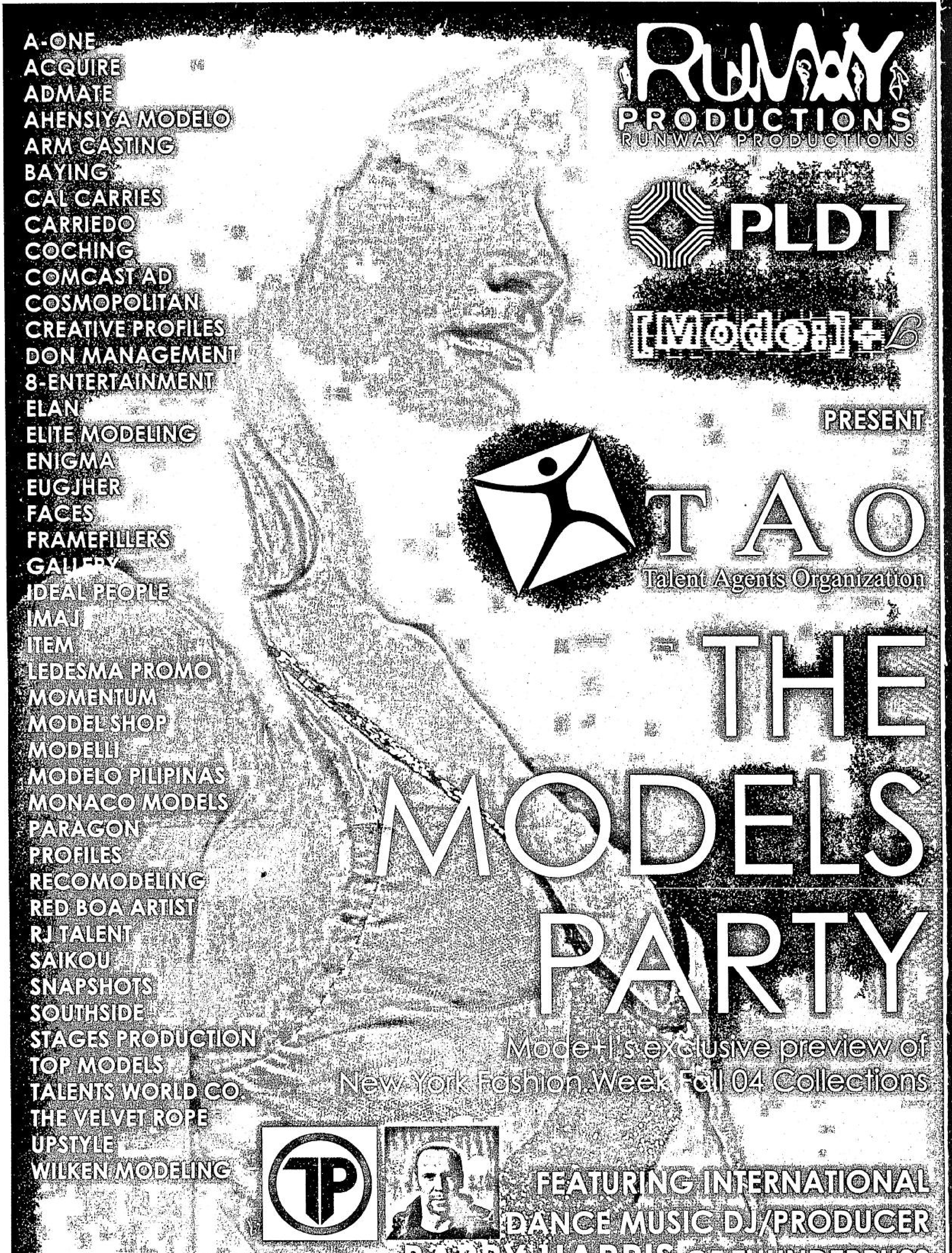

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Asia's Nightingale flies away

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST weekend, viewers were surprised to hear that Lani Misalucha, dubbed as Asia's Nightingale and regarded as one of the country's top pop divas, had decided to give up her flourishing career here in favor of a quiet life with her husband and children in the States.

Some people were shocked by Lani's decision, which they said they couldn't understand because it flew in the face of standard show biz practice in these parts.

After all, Lani had a show biz career to die for, with high-paying recording, concert and TV gigs that had put her and her loved ones on easy street. Why was she giving up all that so her husband could work as a pastor in the US?

Decision

But people close to Lani and her family understood her decision. Unlike many other singing stars, Lani wasn't fixated on stardom and all its perks. She was a musical artist before she was a celebrity, and she felt she didn't have to play the show biz game that others were so obsessed with winning.

After all, she became a star after she had gotten married and had become a mother. Like Boots Anson-Roa decades before her, Lani valued her family more than her career, while enjoying performing and all the financial rewards, popularity and acclaim that went with it.

Good wife and mother

Show biz success did not define her; her being a good wife and mother did.

So, when the option to start a new life with her family in the States came up, Lani made what she felt was the right decision, with no regrets.

Of course, her fans are disappointed—but, being more mature and less ga-ga than the usual musical groupies, they understand, and wish their nightingale well in the new chapter of her life, away from the show biz spotlight, but firmly at the center of her family's heart.

Musical recollection

Besides, it isn't goodbye forever, and definitely not out of sight, out of mind. Because Lani's records and performance videotapes will always be there for some welcome musical recollection whenever the need arises.

The nightingale may have flown away, but her songs remain.

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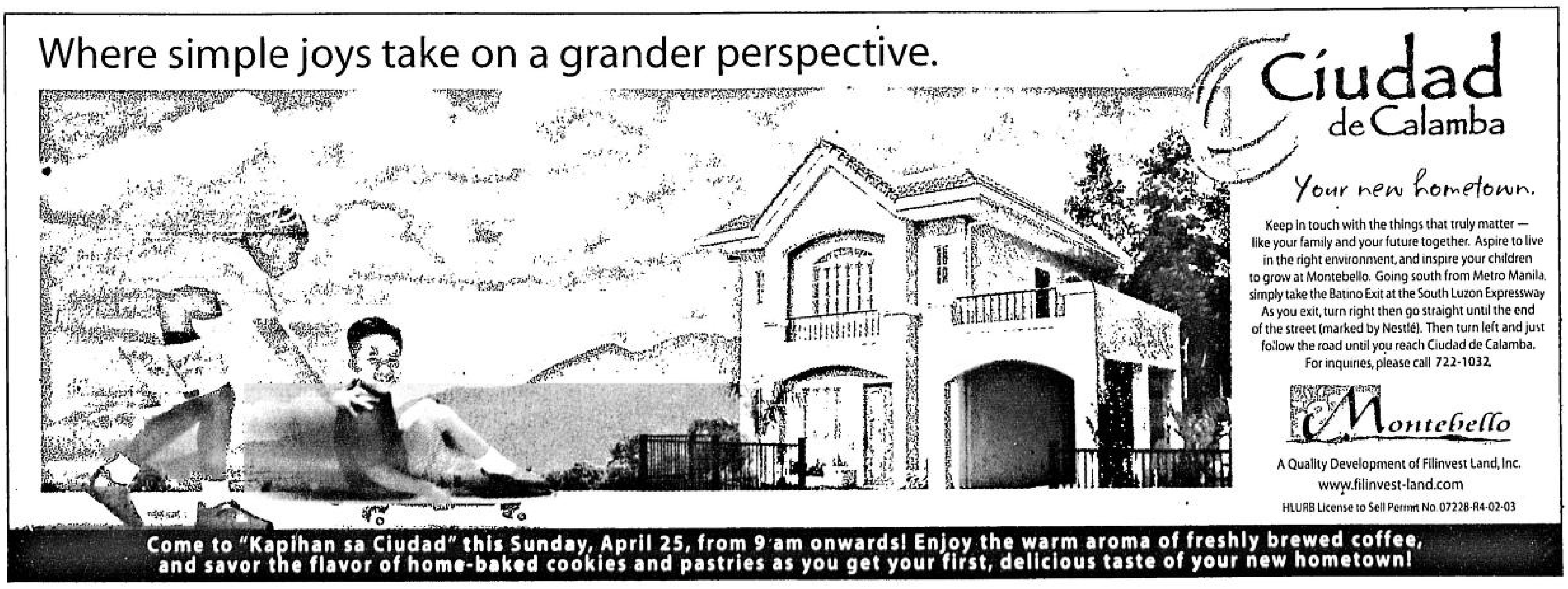

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Sarah Brightman to perform in Manila

MONTAGE

SARAH Brightman dazzled musical-theater audiences when she played the pivotal role of Christine Daaé in "Phantom of the Opera." Since that triumph, her dulcet soprano has graced many other sensational productions.

For the first time in her high-flying career, Brightman's current "Harem 2004 World Tour" is taking her to Manila, for a performance on June 23 at the court of ULTRA, now known as the Philippine Sports Commission Multi-Purpose Arena.

The concert will highlight Sarah's journey from opera and musicals to her pop-classical crossover hits. She gained the title, "queen of the crossover world," as a result of her being able to cut across different musical genres, from Broadway to pop, rock, opera and alternative world music, with consistent grace and panache.

Her hits include "Pie Jesu," "All I Ask of You," "Phantom of the Opera," "Amigos Para Siempre," "Time to Say Goodbye," and "Show Me How to Love."

"Harem," her 2003 release with a Mid-Eastern theme, is an intoxicating fusion of beats, brought to life by Sarah's glistening vocals. Expect the same musical fusion in her June 23 performance here. Call 897-9999.

Pasinaya 2004

Bel-Air Village's ongoing celebration, Pasinaya 2004, offers these treats: April 24, parade of bands, tiangge, foodfest, perya, rides, pedigree canine show, children's pets and photo contests, children's party for a cause, and raffle.

BRIGHTMAN. Queen of crossover world.

April 25, classic car show and motorcade, cooking demo (Margarita Fores), Hi Chords Ensemble, Kasanib Bingo and "Bodabil sa Bel-Air."

Ballet at the Park

Ballet at the Park at 5 p.m. on April 24 at Rizal Park features "Popular Ballet Selections" performed by Ballet Manila, under the artistic direction of Lisa Macuja-Elizalde. Free admission.

Bar gig

Mellow Touch 94.7 has scheduled a bar gig at the newest "gimmick" spot in town, Naughty Strings, owned by Aiza Seguerra, on April 30. The gig features the music of Acoustic Jive.

The station is giving away invites to the event. Tune in to 94.7. Naughty Strings is on Tomas Morato ave., QC.

'Crocs of Darkness'

On April 26 at 11:30 p.m., the National Geographic Magazine telecasts "Crocs of Darkness" on "Croc Chronicles with Dr. Brady Barr." The episode takes viewers to an oil drilling facility deep in the steamy jungles of Gabon in Central Africa. There, Dr. Barr searches for one of the planet's most elusive reptiles, the African Dwarf Crocodile.

Movies on TV

ON HBO, April 24 at 1:15 p.m., "Hitler: The Rise of Evil." April 25 at 8 a.m., "Mad Dog and Glory." April 26 at 3:30 p.m., "Cape Fear." April 27 at 11:45 a.m., "Hitler and I: Reflections on Evil." April 28 at 2:15 p.m., "Born on the Fourth of July." April 29 at 11 a.m., "Boys on the Side." April 30 at 12 noon, "Enemy at the Gates."

On Cinemax, April 24 at 9:45 a.m., "The Laramie Project." April 25 at 1:30 p.m., "Black Hawk Down." April 26 at 4 p.m., "Fathers and Sons." April 27 at 3:45 p.m., "Sense and Sensibility." April 28 at 6 p.m., "Surviving Love." April 29 at 5:30 p.m., "Lost in America." April 30 at 6:30 a.m., "A Town Without Christmas."

Surprisingly charming

From page F1

sexy protagonist (Honasan) who possesses the late Rey dela Cruz' amusing penchant for name-dropping.

"Spartan"
D: David Mamet
S: Val Kilmer

If murky, highly convoluted thrillers are your cup of tea, Mamet's latest directorial effort is for you. In another the-government-is-sinister storyline, an exceptional government agent (Kilmer) is tasked to rescue the kidnapped daughter of the US president. —And then, he discovers that everything is not as it seems. Kilmer and Macy are great, but Mamet's script and direction lack his patented quirky, cerebral humor, and are occasionally stodgy.

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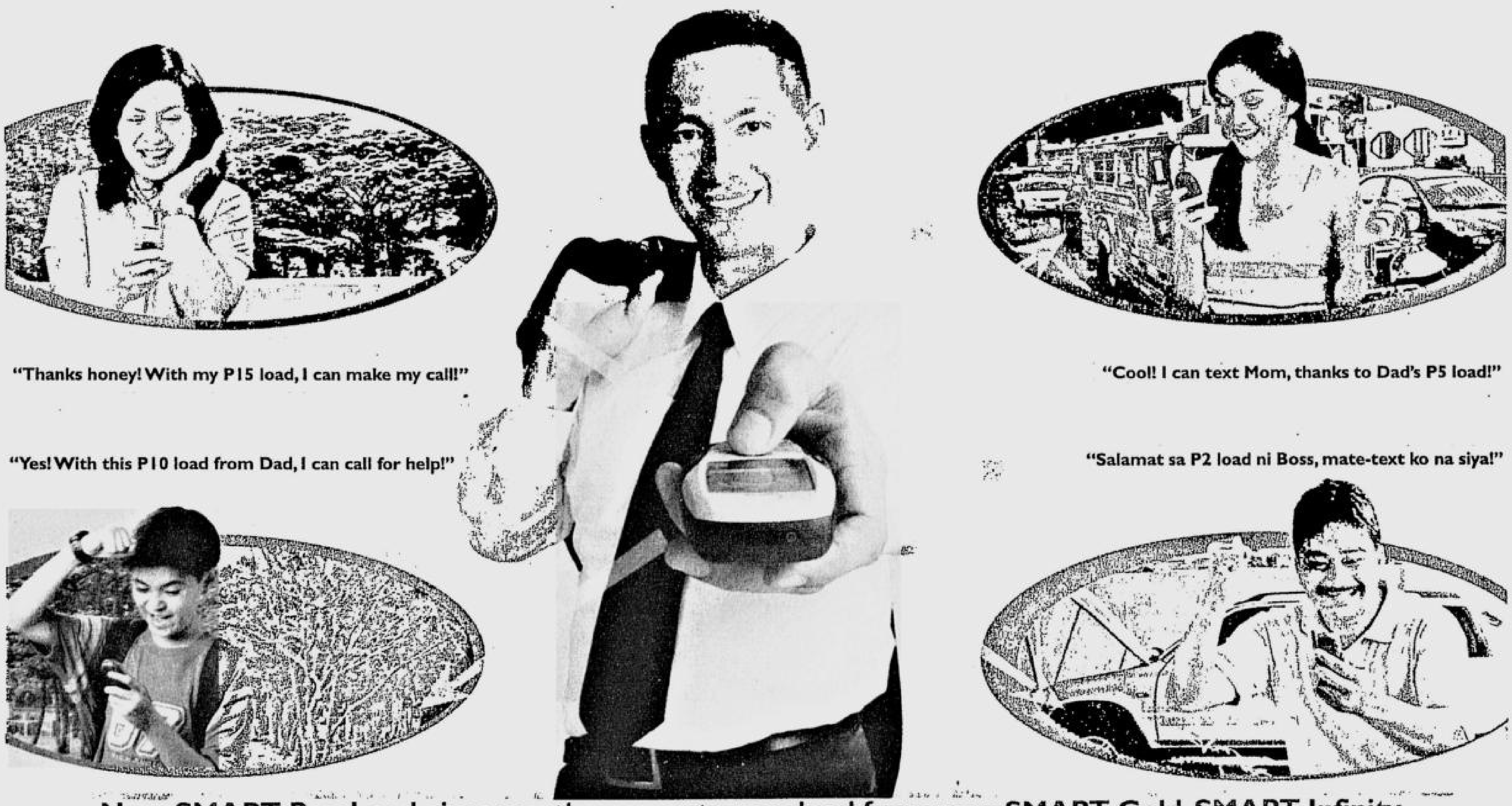
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SATURDAY Super

Super! Countdown 16 days 'til the Vote!

Claudine Barretto makes a splash

Maksim over drive page H2

Miguel Zubiri to wed Audrey Tan page I2

Produced by TIM YAP
Photography: PAOLO PINEDA
Styling: CHECHEL JOSON
Makeup: JING MONIS
Cover Star: CLAUDINE BARRETTO in Folded & Hung

Tim Yap

I ONCE asked Claudine Barretto to be my prom date. It was right after I watched her play "Sandy" in Grease at a Rep Summer workshop light years ago.

She didn't respond to my beeps at the time. Years and several relationships later, I find myself face to face with her again, this time after watching her on TV as a mermaid. She has just arrived from raiding the Louis Vuitton store. She sat in Jing Monis' chair for some primping for this Super! shoot.

Being Miss B is not such an easy task—juggling a jampacked schedule that takes her from studio sessions to far away locations to fashion shoots to commercial endorsements—it's amazing how she makes it look so easy. "I think I've had only two hours of sleep the past three days," she says right before posing for Paolo Pineda.

As an actress, Claudine, has lived out almost all of life's fantasies, making her the top draw of our generation. She swam through highs and lows and managed to weather the storms and ride the wave—with grace.

She shocked us this year with a Folded and Hung billboard that showed her off as a bronzed goddess. Fashion magazines suddenly took interest and lined up to put her on their covers. Finding her stride, she is in her element, revealing a very classy Claudine.

For this Super! exclusive shoot, Miss B shows how she can be anything she wants—and get away with it.

The thing about fame is ... that it has so many advantages and disadvantages.

The thing I love most about what I do is... that it is my passion.

People might be surprised to know that I am ... friendly.

The best thing that I can ever receive right now are ... 4R albums. I love documenting moments in my life and I have so many pictures.

The most important thing I've learned is ... trials will always come your way, people make mistakes, we will all make mistakes but at the end of the day what's important is that you know you did your best.

I wish when I started off that I've been told ... actually *marami nang* warnings from everybody (my sisters, etc.) even before I started. They already told me the worst, so when it came—it wasn't so bad.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was ... the death of my ex-boyfriend Rico.

And what this taught me was ... that what God said was true. His plans are not there to harm you, but for you to prosper.

The happiest moment of my life was ... when Raymart proposed. It taught me that when you really love someone you'd give up anything. I didn't think twice when he proposed, not even for a second.

The secret to happiness is ... Laugh. Think Positive. Have Friends.

My best ever outfit consisted of ... this sexy dress I bought in Milan. It was maroon and had a lot of ruffles. I wore it to the world premiere of "Milan." My hair was long and curly, I felt like

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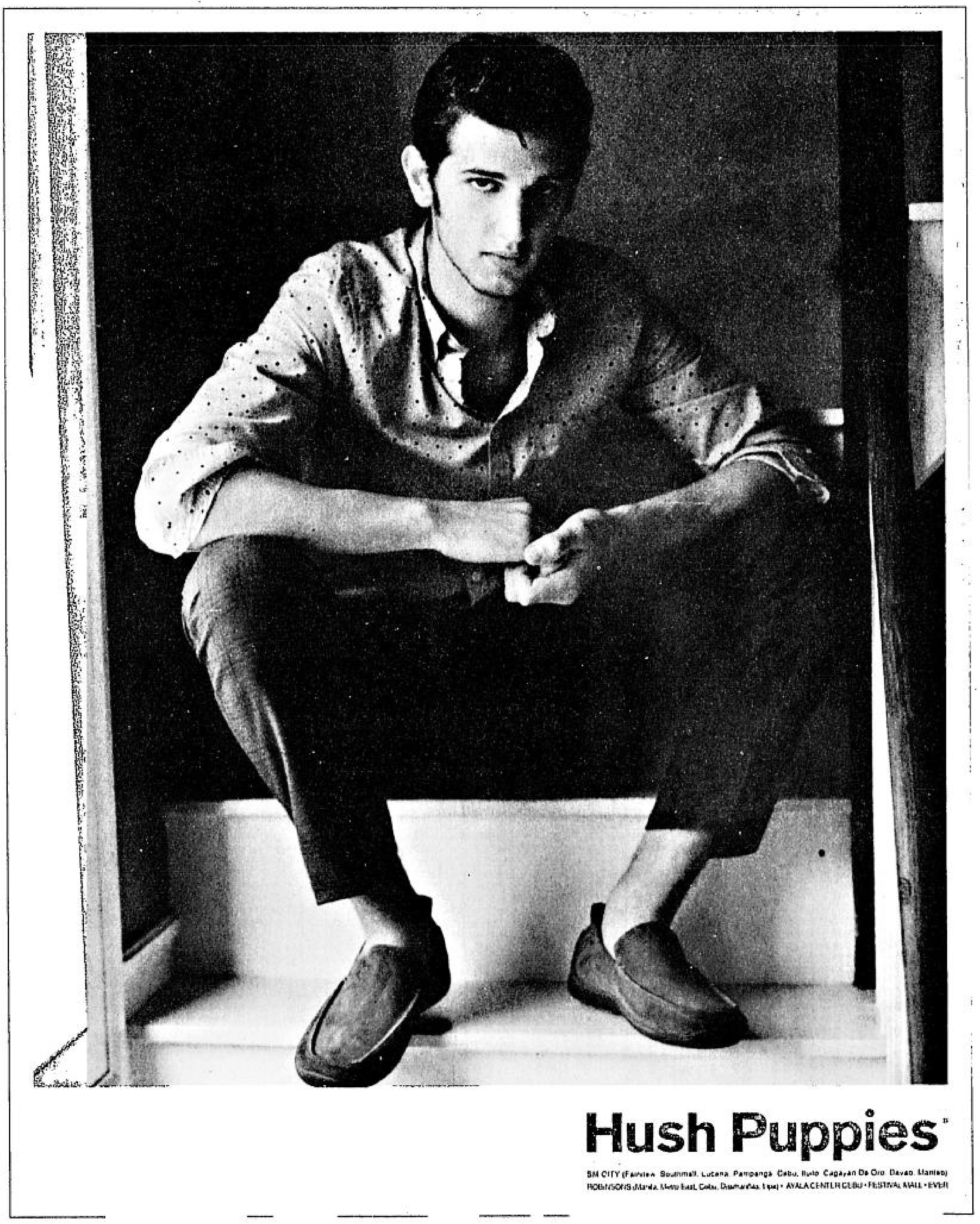
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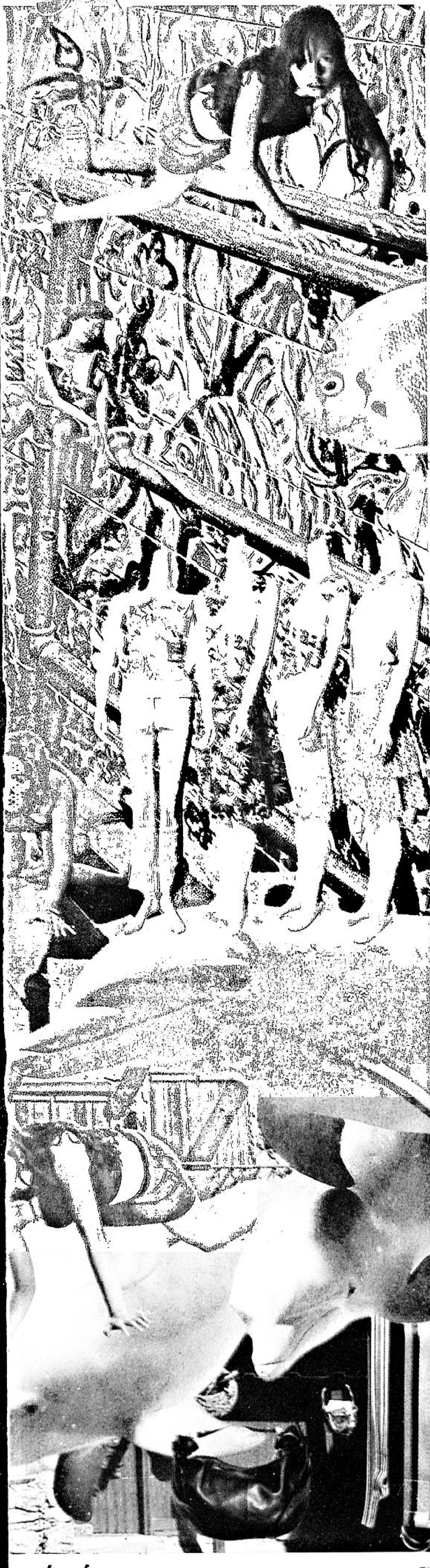


From page G1

I was going flamenco dancing.

My Super! Saturday Night consists of ... dinner out and a movie with Raymart.

The soundtrack to my life would include ... Alive by J.Lo.

If I were invisible for a day, I would ...visit all my favorite Hollywood stars. First on my list is Nicolas Cage.

The things that make me most angry ... are liars

If I was the most powerful person on earth ... I'd provide everyone with work and education.

My votes for president and for vice president go to ... no comment.

The best thing about family is ... when you have a good one.

When I'm probably gone they'll probably say ... she had a big heart

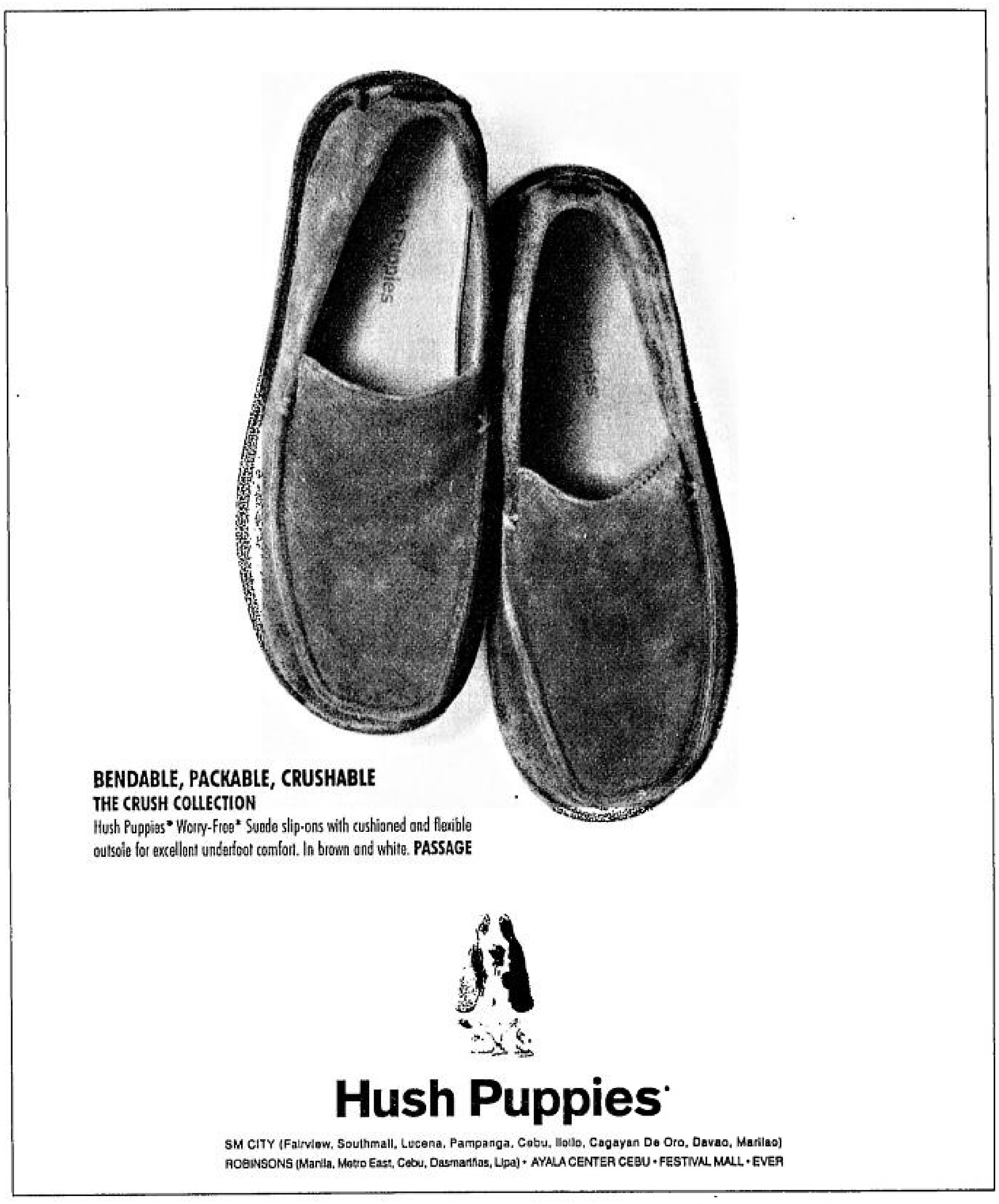
When I retire I would like to ... still work. Be active, I want to be doing something *pa rin*. I hate getting bored.

The world would be a much better place if ... everyone had a job and access to education.

My hero is ... my dad.

What makes my life worth living are ... my family, Raymart and my fans, who I also refer to as my friends.

My greatest hope for the future is ...uhhmmm. *Meron pa ba?* Having a family of my own.



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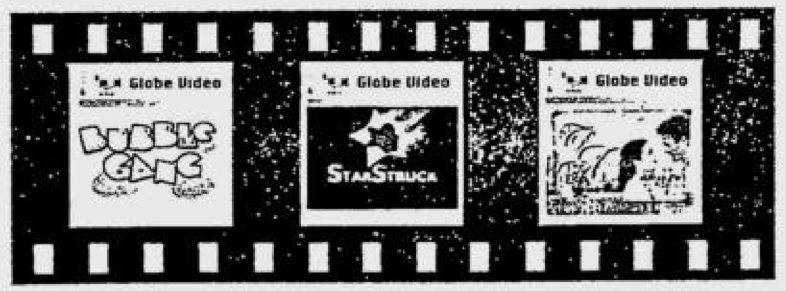
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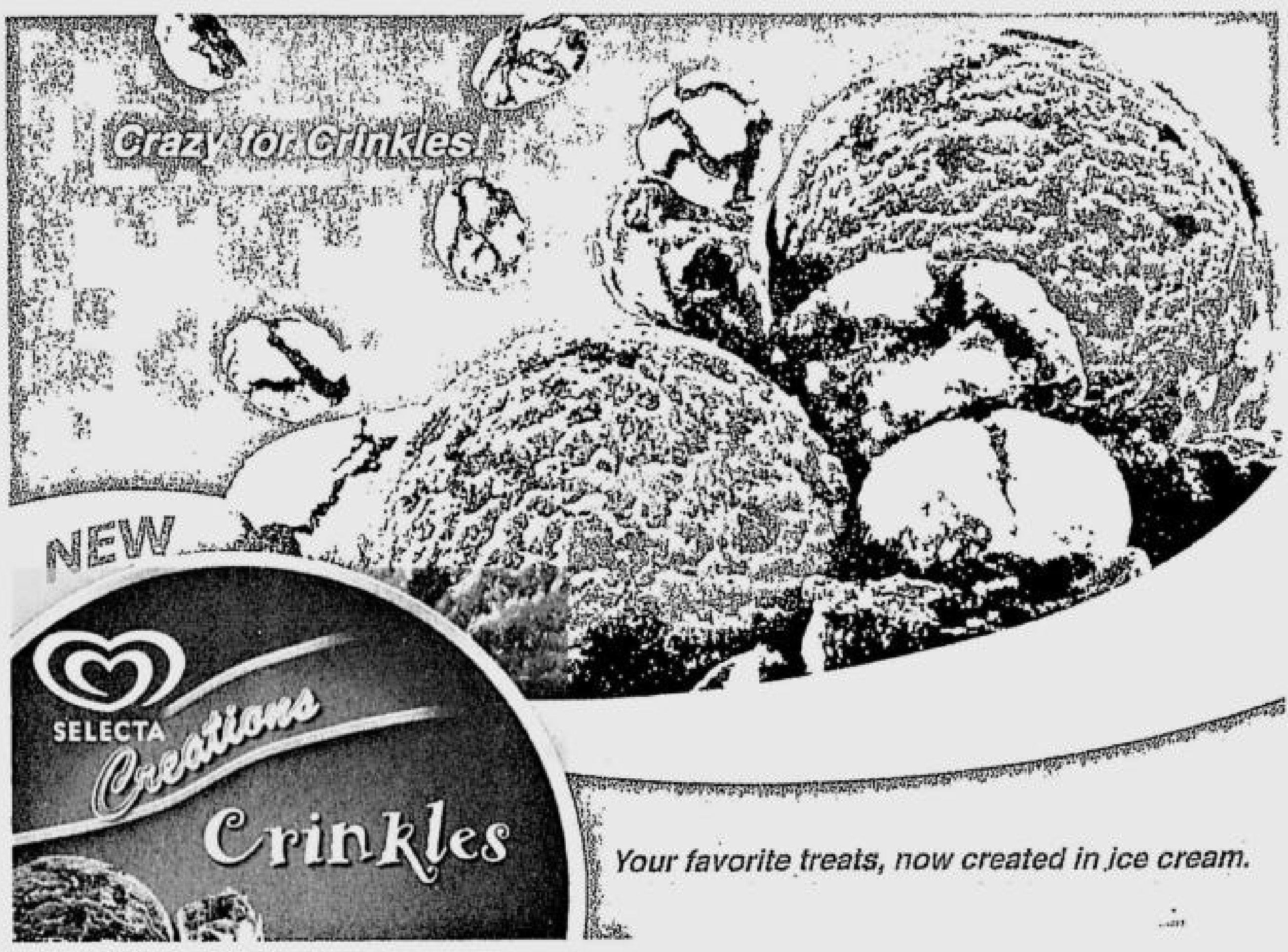
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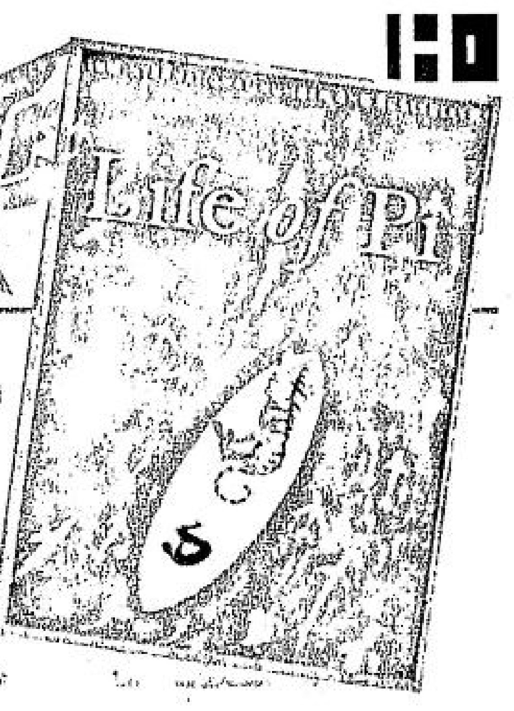

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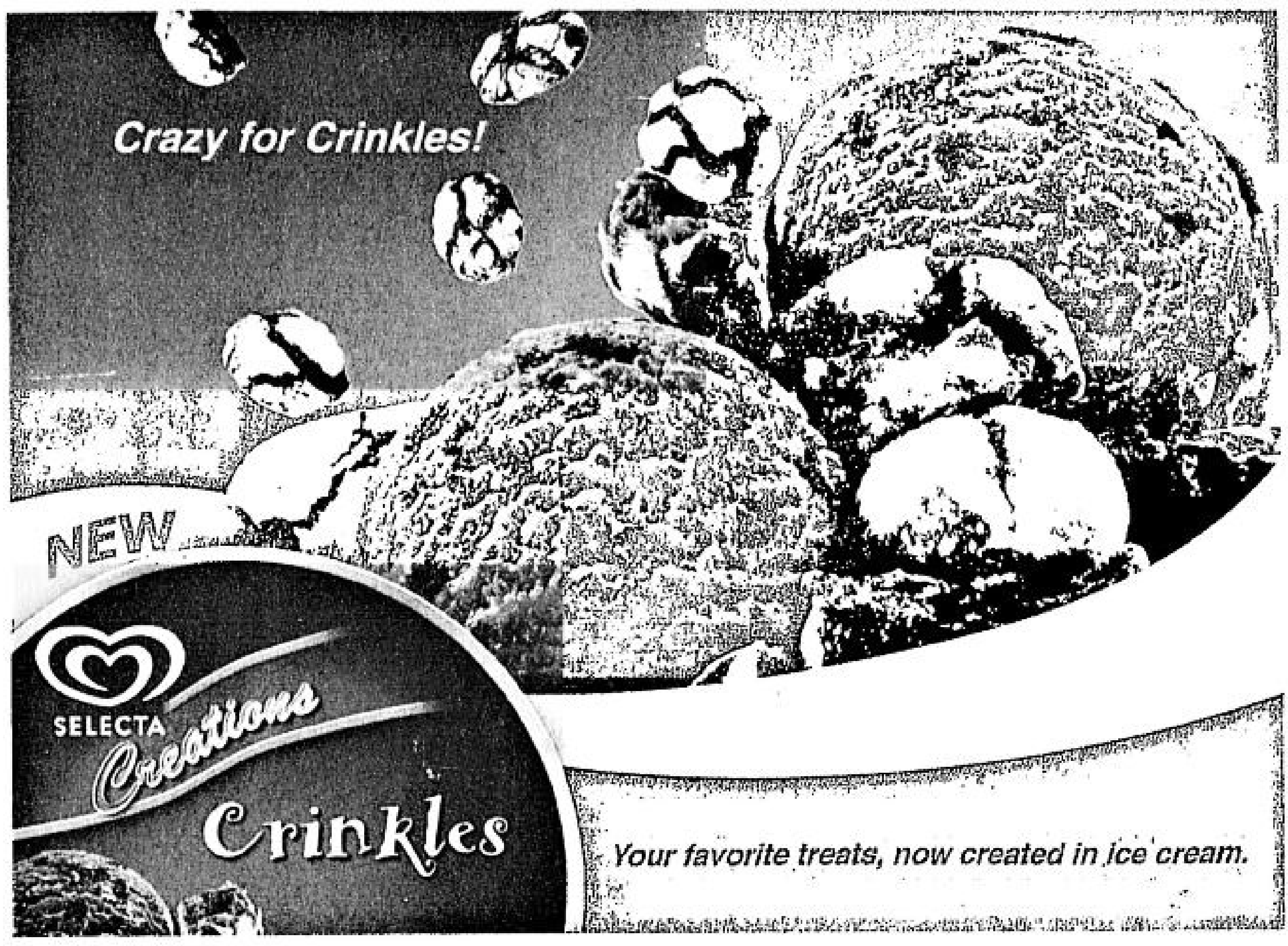
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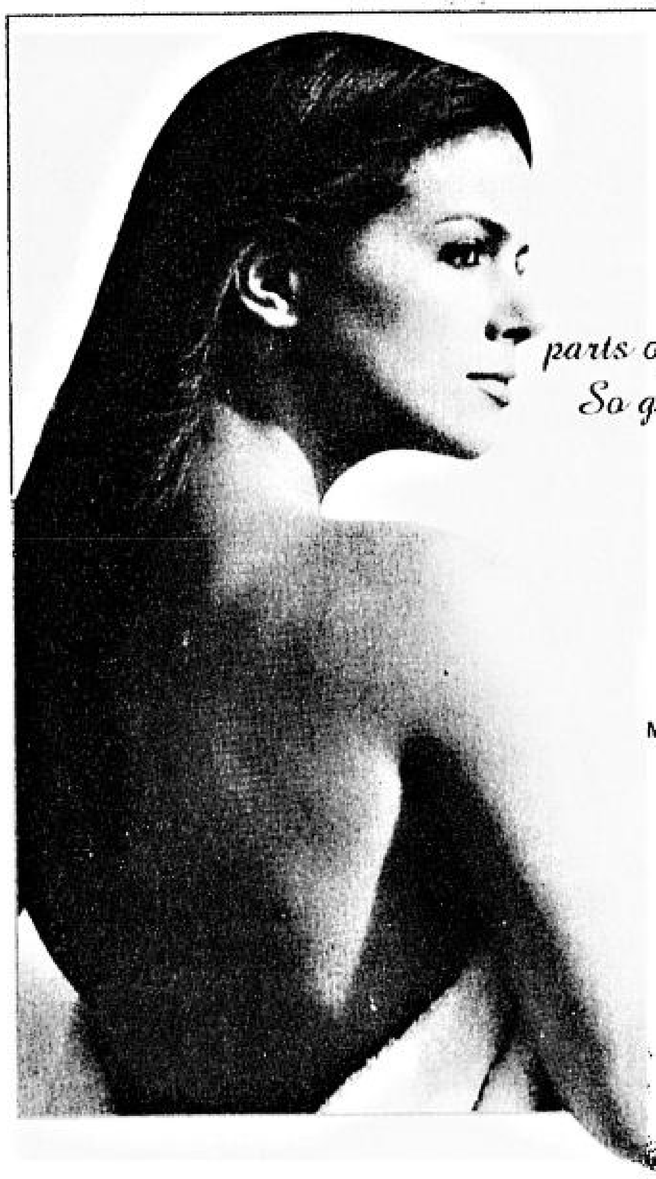

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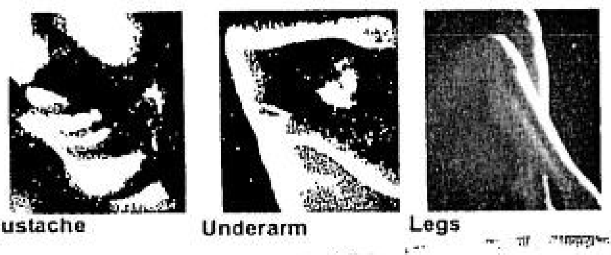
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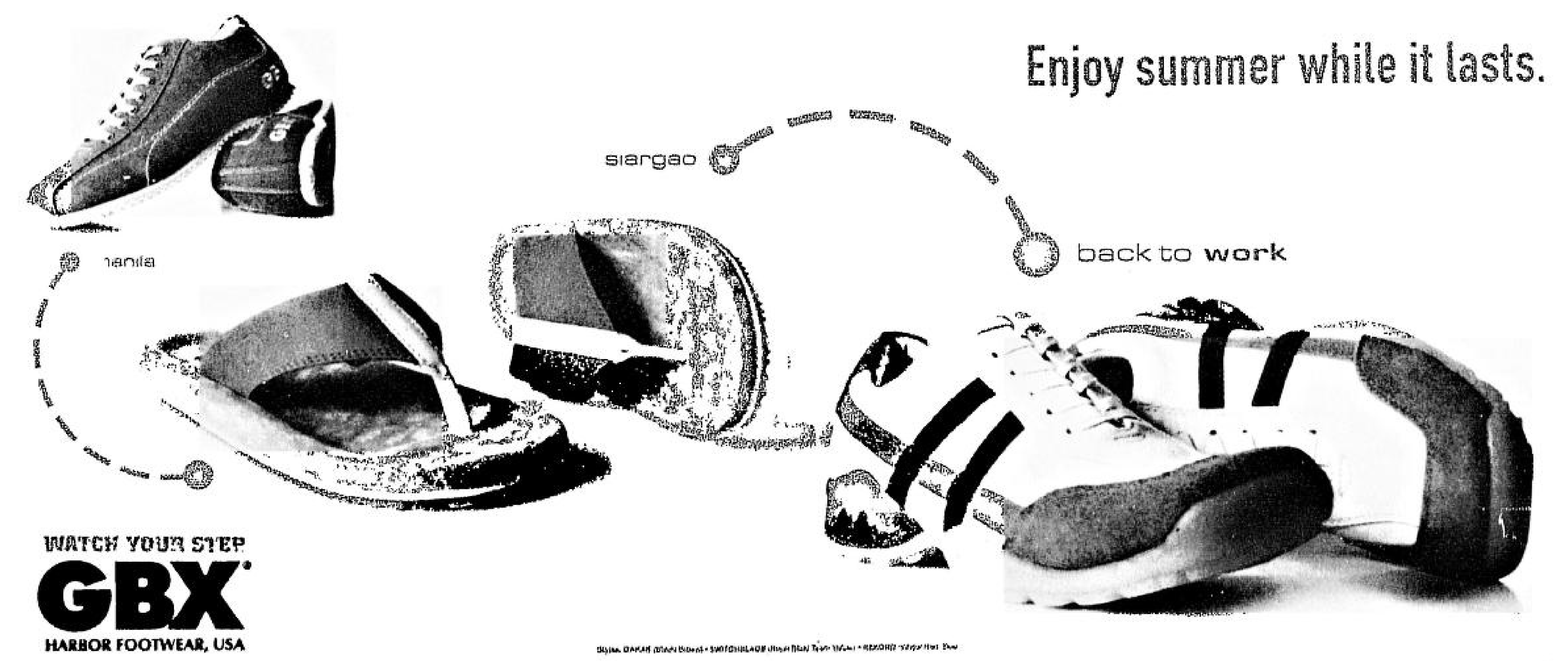
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Maksim overdrive

By Martin Valdes
Photos by Steve Tirona
Assistants: Marcus Maguigad and Albert Genato

HE'S young, he's attractive, he's tall, and his fingers have more moves than the LA Lakers. Maksim Mrvica is back to seduce audiences with his brand of kinetic classical interpretations. A few months ago, Maksim exploded into the Manila scene igniting the evenings with the sound of the familiar made fresh and fiery. Now he's returned with a new album with more compositions called "The Piano Player Re-packed." Super! sat down with the lanky Croatian ivory-pounder and tickled his keys with a few off-note questions.

You started playing piano at a young age. Did you ever want to be anything else? Like a football player or a porn star, maybe?

Not really. All my life I wanted to be a piano player. All my friends wanted to be policemen, or doctors, or surgeons. But all I wanted ever since I was young was to play classical music.

Did you ever wish you had just … a smaller instrument?

Yeah, a few times. When you have to travel from country to country, and every place has a different piano, and not all pianos are that good. Sometimes I wish I just played the violin. At least you can go on holidays with your violin. Sometimes I want to go on vacation somewhere and I can't because there's no piano there. But the last time I had a show in Manila, that piano wasn't bad.

Nice job of putting a modern twist on classical pieces. Ever consider a modern piece with a classical twist? Like Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" in C Major? Or a Sir Mix-A-Lot version called "Baby got Johann Sebastian Bach"?

(Confused look) Well, I've never done it. All my life I've been trained in classical music and I've played only classical music. What is interesting for me is to change classical into modern, and not really the other way around.

You were 18 when you won your first major competition. Did that help with the ladies?

Ah. (laughs) A little bit, yeah. I did some television interviews after I won, and (laughs) yeah, I suppose it did help.

Your first album of contemporary Croatian pieces, "Gestures," did really well. Now you've gone international. Are you considered a big celebrity back home yet?

People in Croatia knew me from before because I've invested so much in my career for a long time, but I don't think I am a celebrity or anything like that.

So no streets named after you as of now?

Not that I know. I don't really think about things like that.

We've got a Chinese restaurant with your name on it.

I know. And there's a French restaurant in Paris as well.

So, do you hang out with famous people?

You know that Croatian doctor on the television show "ER," Doctor Luka Kovac? Goran Visnjic? He is a friend of mine, I know him from my hometown!

What's your favorite purchase with a pianist's paycheck?

I have this electronic piano…

Oh Christ…

(Laughs) But I really love my car. It's a Toyota Celica and I'm going to drive it from London to Croatia. Normally it takes about two days, but my wife, my friend and I will stop in several cities along the way.

Ever screw up during a live performance and think, "What the heck, no one knows how this piece is supposed to go anyway"?

It's very difficult to play a whole concert without making one mistake. I don't think anybody can do it. The levels of mistakes are different, you know. Sometimes when I listen to some fantastic pianists who don't seem to make mistakes and play everything perfectly, it doesn't do anything for me. So small mistakes are not that important to me, because you have a bigger idea of what you are doing. And also, different places have different crowds. Some know more about classical music than others.

How about the whole rock-n-roll thing of drinking or getting high before a concert?

I can't afford to drink before a concert because of my hands, you know. My muscles. If I take alcohol, I won't be able to control them!

Who is better, Vanessa Carlton or Alicia Keys?

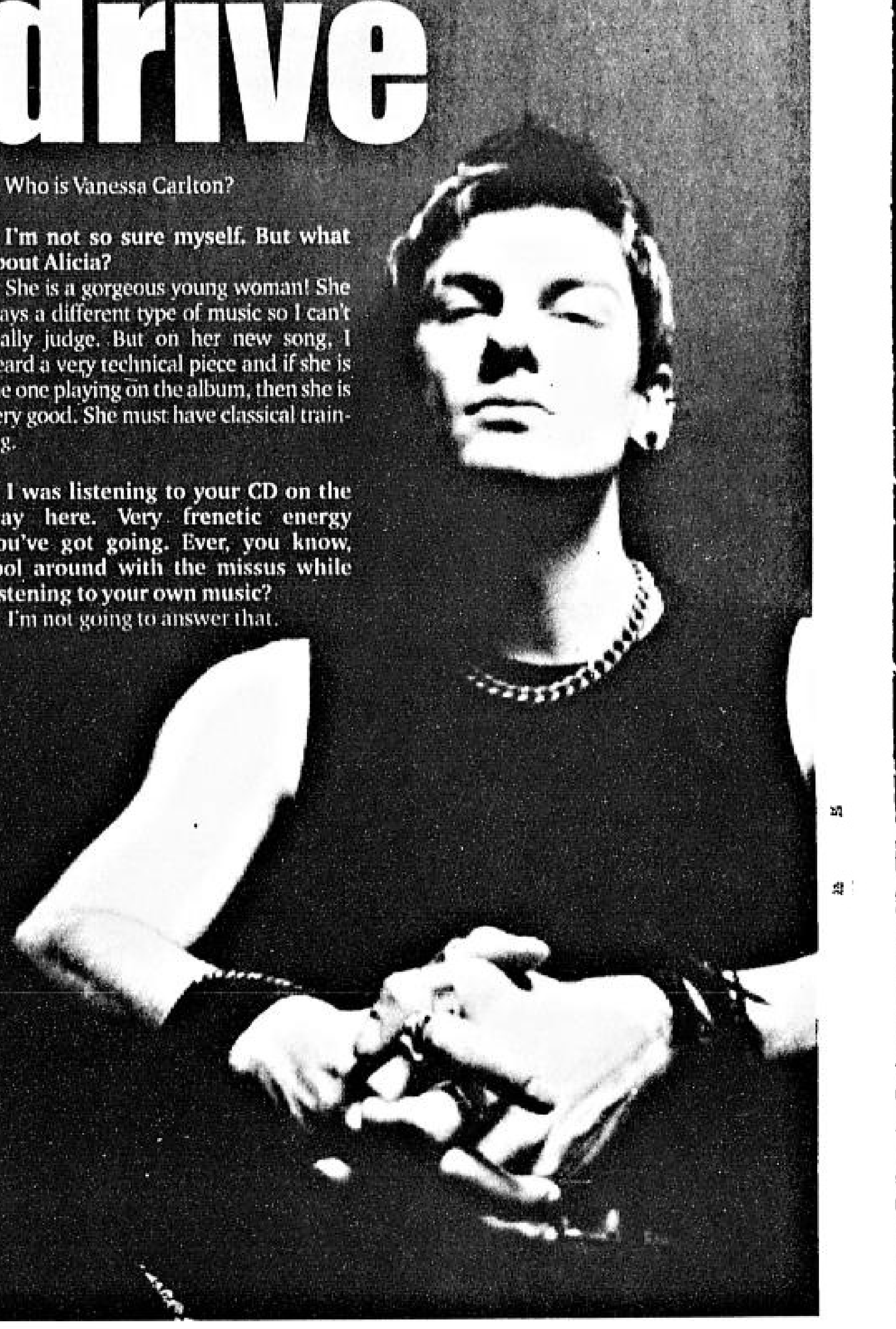
Who is Vanessa Carlton?

I'm not so sure myself. But what about Alicia?

She is a gorgeous young woman! She plays a different type of music so I can't really judge. But on her new song, I heard a very technical piece and if she is the one playing on the album, then she is very good. She must have classical training.

I was listening to your CD on the way here. Very frenetic energy you've got going. Ever, you know, fool around with the missus while listening to your own music?

I'm not going to answer that.



The Reality of Fantasy

From page H1

our heads, we may have believed in the past that we are way cooler than we really are.

Since the curiosity-piquing words "once upon a time" were first uttered, the human mind has exhibited the uncanny ability to take to the clouds and dwell for a while in worlds vastly different from the one we know. Why else do we trek to the cinemas and pore over books? Because fantasy is our greatest—and easiest—mode of escape. Indeed, it may be more potent than truth.

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

Truth may be stranger than fiction, yet many times it is in fiction that we discern truth. We've long lived with stories of the infinite struggle between good and evil. Some of us may have imagined in the past that we were superheroes fighting sinister adversaries. (In a prime example of lack of better judgment, I used to loiter around in a slick costume complete with a leather utility belt, pretending I was Wonder Woman. Then I turned 27). We've grown up with fables that present talking animals and mythical creatures to illustrate the values of trust and friendship. Fairy tales with beautiful maidens, fire-breathing dragons and charming princes have taught that love conquers all. Even Jesus Christ wrapped age-old wisdom in parables. And we were stirred to our senses and fought for our freedom after drawing inspiration from Jose Rizal's Noli and Fili.

Sometimes, fantasy can set us free.

Tall tales

When mythos weaves with truth; when the extraordinary collides with the everyday; when surreal merges with real in the same space—this is the meaning of Magical Realism. The mind's ability to wander untethered and explore uncharted regions in the imagination becomes particularly handy when we attempt to fill gaps in understanding, to explain mysteries that we struggle to grasp.

Yet while they are vehicles for imparting insight, fantasy and imagination also enable us to deal with the cudgels of reality, and perhaps even veil our human weaknesses. For just as we can reveal truth in storytelling, it is also through these myths that we can cloak it.

"The elements allowed me to go on living," narrates Pi Patel, the main character in the book, "The Life of Pi" by Yann Martel, an excellent work of fiction that illustrates how fantasy becomes the best means of escape from personal torment. The novel tells of Pi Patel, a young Indian boy, who recounts his traumatic experience stranded on a lifeboat for 227 hunger and thirst-filled days at sea, being in the strange company of a hyena, an orangutan, a crippled zebra and a 450-pound Bengal tiger. When he finally survives his ordeal and reaches the coast of Mexico, the Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his fantastical tale and compel him to tell "the truth." Pi then narrates a second, more conventional story, and he then remarks, "in both stories the ship sinks, my entire family dies, and I suffer … which story do you prefer?"

Tall tales were also the medium by which a dying father absolves himself of his inadequacies and failures in the Tim Burton-directed "Big Fish." The father indulges his son with his reconstructed life's story filled with heroic adventures among shy giants, soothsaying witches, vertically challenged ringmasters and Siamese twins. His overactive imagination only caused the vexation of his son who merely sought "the truth."

Then again, what is truth but a story believed?

BIG fish on earth. Tim Burton's magic realist tale.

SCHEHERAZADE

ONCE upon an Arabian Night. Scheherazade was such a tease.

Surreality check

Yet the very fantasy that serves as a means of escape can also become a trap. The problem with being able to bend reality is, we could end up with just that: a bent reality. When we believe too much in the myths we have created for ourselves, we become prisoners of our own fiction.

I also believe it is this very collision of fantasy with reality that has ensnared our country for so long, and may be a peril we shall face yet again in the upcoming elections. How many times in our history has the absurd so assimilated the real, that we could not distinguish one from the other anymore?

It seems we are indeed a figment of our Imagine Nation. The former First Lady Imelda even admitted to being the embodied fantasy of the struggling poor, who could live vicariously through her.

Living out a fantasy is apparently a default method of escape from serious issues one would rather not deal with. A few weeks back, I had the opportunity to ask a taxi driver about who he was voting for this May. He proudly rattled off the retinue of movie stars and *artistas* running for public office. Not meaning to proselytize, I queried the reason for his choices. He responded with the simple logic that, since they were all beautiful and used to being filmed all their lives, they'd have no problem projecting to the camera. "*Makikita ng buong mundo na magaganda at guapo tayong Pinoy*," he said. Who can blame him for this line of reasoning, though? It's easy to be hypnotized by seductive reveries; they alleviate and soften our daily toil.

Real Magic

I think the real magic in stories and fantasies lies not in the ability of imagination to roam boundlessly—it goes further than that, because the magic for me is being able to come back, albeit with a newfound sense of wonder.

In that sense, stories are there to inspire us, not to cloud our judgment or distort our reason. It's cool to be able to jump on a magic carpet and fly far away, but it's even cooler to know how to land.

Click me baby, one more time at: inca_orange@yahoo.com

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Yeah, a few times. When you have to travel from country to country, and every place has a different piano, and not all pianos are that good. Sometimes I wish I just played the violin. At least you can go on holidays with your violin. Sometimes I want to go on vacation somewhere and I can't because there's no piano there. But the last time I had a show in Manila, that piano wasn't bad.

Nice job of putting a modern twist on classical pieces. Ever consider a modern piece with a classical twist? Like Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" in C Major? Or a Sir Mix-A-Lot version called "Baby got Johann Sebastian Bach"?

(Confused look) Well, I've never done it. All my life I've been trained in classical music and I've played only classical music. What is interesting for me is to change classical into modern, and not really the other way around.

You were 18 when you won your first major competition. Did that help with the ladies?

Ah, (laughs) A little bit, yeah. I did some television interviews after I won, and (laughs) yeah, I suppose it did help.

Your first album of contemporary Croatian pieces, "Gestures," did really well. Now you've gone international. Are you considered a big celebrity back home yet?

People in Croatia knew me from before because I've invested so much in my career for a long time, but I don't think I am a celebrity or anything like that.

So no streets named after you as of now?

Not that I know. I don't really think about things like that.

We've got a Chinese restaurant with your name on it.

I know. And there's a French restaurant in Paris as well.

So, do you hang out with famous people?

You know that Croatian doctor on the television show "ER," Doctor Luka Kovac? Goran Visnjic? He is a friend of mine. I know him from my hometown!

What's your favorite purchase with a pianist's paycheck?

I have this electronic piano...

Oh Christ...

(Laughs) But I really love my car. It's a Toyota Celica and I'm going to drive it from London to Croatia. Normally it takes about two days, but my wife, my friend and I will stop in several cities along the way.

Ever screw up during a live performance and think, "What the heck, no one knows how this piece is supposed to go anyway"?

It's very difficult to play a whole concert without making one mistake. I don't think anybody can do it. The levels of mistakes are different, you know. Sometimes when I listen to some fantastic pianists who don't seem to make mistakes and play everything perfectly, it doesn't do anything for me. So small mistakes are not that important to me, because you have a bigger idea of what you are doing. And also, different places have different crowds. Some know more about classical music than others.

How about the whole rock-n-roll thing of drinking or getting high before a concert?

I can't afford to drink before a concert because of my hands, you know. My muscles. If I take alcohol, I won't be able to control them!

Who is better, Vanessa Carlton or Alicia Keys?

Who is Vanessa Carlton?

I'm not so sure myself. But what about Alicia?

She is a gorgeous young woman! She plays a different type of music so I can't really judge. But on her new song, I heard a very technical piece and if she is the one playing on the album, then she is very good. She must have classical training.

I was listening to your CD on the way here. Very frenetic energy you've got going. Ever, you know, fool around with the missus while listening to your own music?

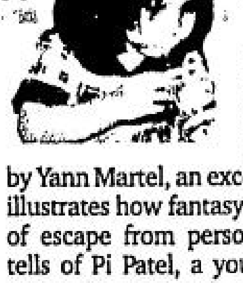
I'm not going to answer that.

The Reality of Fantasy

From page H1

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz



our heads, we may have believed in the past that we are way cooler than we really are.

Since the curiosity-piquing words "once upon a time" were first uttered, the human mind has exhibited the uncanny ability to take to the clouds and dwell for a while in worlds vastly different from the one we know. Why else do we trek to the cinemas and pore over books? Because fantasy is our greatest—and easiest—mode of escape. Indeed, it may be more potent than truth.

Truth may be stranger than fiction, yet many times it is in fiction that we discern truth. We've long lived with stories of the infinite struggle between good and evil. Some of us may have imagined in the past that we were superheroes fighting sinister adversaries. (In a prime example of lack of better judgment, I used to loiter around in a slick costume complete with a leather utility belt, pretending I was Wonder Woman. Then I turned 27). We've grown up with fables that present talking animals and mythical creatures to illustrate the values of trust and friendship. Fairy tales with beautiful maidens, fire-breathing dragons and charming princes have taught that love conquers all. Even Jesus Christ wrapped age-old wisdom in parables. And we were stirred to our senses and fought for our freedom after drawing inspiration from Jose Rizal's Noli and Fili.

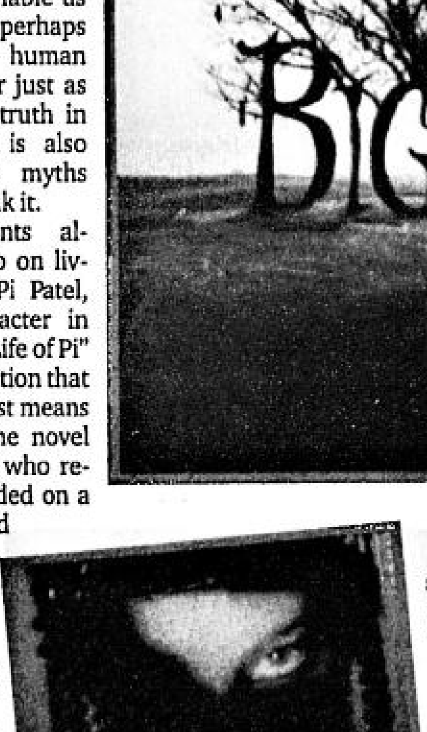
Sometimes, fantasy can set us free.

Tall tales

When mythos weaves with truth; when the extraordinary collides with the everyday; when surreal merges with real in the same space—this is the meaning of Magical Realism. The mind's ability to wander untethered and explore uncharted regions in the imagination becomes particularly handy when we attempt to fill gaps in understanding, to explain mysteries that we struggle to grasp.

Yet while they are vehicles for imparting insight, fantasy and imagination also enable us to deal with the cudgels of reality, and perhaps even veil our human weaknesses. For just as we can reveal truth in storytelling, it is also through these myths that we can cloak it.

"The elements allowed me to go on living," narrates Pi Patel, the main character in the book, "The Life of Pi" by Yann Martel, an excellent work of fiction that illustrates how fantasy becomes the best means of escape from personal torment. The novel tells of Pi Patel, a young Indian boy, who recounts his traumatic experience stranded on a lifeboat for 227 hunger and thirst-filled days at sea, being in the strange company of a hyena, an orangutan, a crippled zebra and a 450-pound Bengal tiger. When he finally survives his ordeal and reaches the coast of Mexico, the Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his fantastical tale and compel him to tell "the truth." Pi then narrates a second, more conventional story, and he then remarks, "in both stories the ship sinks, my entire family dies, and I suffer ... which story do you prefer?"



ONCE upon an Arabian Night. Scheherazade was such a tease.

BIG fish on earth. Tim Burton's magic realist tale.

Tall tales were also the medium by which a dying father absolves himself of his inadequacies and failures in the Tim Burton-directed "Big Fish." The father indulges his son with his reconstructed life's story filled with heroic adventures among shy giants, soothsaying witches, vertically challenged ringmasters and Siamese twins. His overactive imagination only caused the vexation of his son who merely sought "the truth."

Then again, what is truth but a story believed?

Surreality check

Yet the very fantasy that serves as a means of escape can also become a trap. The problem with being able to bend reality is, we could end up with just that: a bent reality. When we believe too much in the myths we have created for ourselves, we become prisoners of our own fiction.

I also believe it is this very collision of fantasy with reality that has ensnared our country for so long, and may be a peril we shall face yet again in the upcoming elections. How many times in our history has the absurd so assimilated the real, that we could not distinguish one from the other anymore?

It seems we are indeed a figment of our Imagine Nation. The former First Lady Imelda even admitted to being the embodied fantasy of the struggling poor, who could live vicariously through her.

Living out a fantasy is apparently a default method of escape from serious issues one would rather not deal with. A few weeks back, I had the opportunity to ask a taxi driver about who he was voting for this May. He proudly rattled off the retinue of movie stars and *artistas* running for public office. Not meaning to proselytize, I queried the reason for his choices. He responded with the simple logic that, since they were all beautiful and used to being filmed all their lives, they'd have no problem projecting to the camera. *"Makikita ng buong mundo na magaganda at guapo tayong Pinoy,"* he said. Who can blame him for this line of reasoning, though? It's easy to be hypnotized by seductive reveries; they alleviate and soften our daily toil.

Real Magic

I think the real magic in stories and fantasies lies not in the ability of imagination to roam boundlessly—it goes further than that, because the magic for me is being able to come back, albeit with a newfound sense of wonder.

In that sense, stories are there to inspire us, not to cloud our judgment or distort our reason. It's cool to be able to jump on a magic carpet and fly far away, but it's even cooler to know how to land.

Click me baby, one more time at: inca_orange@yahoo.com

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Summer project: lose weight!

Lemon-aide

Giselle Segovia

FRITZ, my bash-sister says all the time, "There's always going to be a fat lady inside every woman."

Perhaps with so many gyms and diet programs to choose from, this New Age saying just might apply to all genders. To a certain extent, this is good. People become more aware of keeping fit, eating right and generally living a healthy lifestyle.

I know this first-hand to be a fact because I myself lost more or less 50 pounds—roughly equivalent to a robust teenage Labrador retriever, a hefty preschooler or a slender grade 4 pupil.

Yep, I was huge. For sure, you are all wondering how I did it. All right, let me tell you the age-old secret (drum roll) ... ta-da! Exercise, ladies and gentlemen. I did taebo for six months and after falling in love with Billy Blanks and almost immediately realizing I couldn't possibly have a chance, I gave him up and enrolled myself in a fitness center. For all that lovingly accumulated mass to be burned steadily, it took me a full year of regular gym visits and super-reluctantly cutting down on my food intake. For your 411, brisk walking for 20 minutes on the treadmill is equivalent to just about 1 cookie. Go figure.

Losing weight is *not* easy—don't believe any human being who says it is! It cannot happen in an instant—you cannot do it with sheer luck, and certainly not by cramming. But two months is a good start. Too much idle time this summer is a fantastic opportunity to get healthier. Choose the workout that suits your interests and schedule best, and seat your way to your desired weight. It's all a matter of willpower. The first few weeks are the most difficult. Once you get the hang of it, you'll be Jane Fonda or err, Fabio, in no time.

However, like everything else on the planet, too much of this can be harmful. Obsessing about keeping fit (too much diet/physical activity) ironically, can result in malnutrition and fatigue. I have been working out for almost three years now because the fat lady inside of me is still singing (I honestly think she'll never stop)... except the thing is, I don't kill myself over being weight-conscious. I have long accepted that genetics-wise, I wasn't blessed to have perfectly cylindrical thighs.

Besides, I love eating (who doesn't?), I can never ever give up chocolates and I cannot resist a sumptuous meal. I still do what I can to perspire, but I simply try to remember that the most important thing in striving to lose weight is simultaneously putting substantial efforts not to lose your self.

Saturday, April 24

Throngs of good-looking men will definitely make their way to Greenbelt 1 later at 10 p.m. to be part of "Flesh," Manila's first-ever circuit party, with the always-incredible music of Kevin Ruiz as reverberating backdrop. Of course women with motives to pull may want to think twice before walking in. Honey, it's not our market but it sure sounds like loads of fun. Check it out at the Expo Exchange, 2nd level, Greenbelt 1, Makati City. Tickets are available at Absinth Bar (757-4966), Bed Bar (404-3662) and Komiks Café (526-2547). This party is organized by a group called "Kokun" composed of gorgeous gay men—and Studio 23.

Then again, "The Model's Party" at the Tent should be filled with volumes of heavenly beings as well. Just take note of the event' s title. Plus, international dance music DJ/producer Barry Harris of Thunderpuss will be setting the speakers on fire. 9 p.m. at the NBC Tent.

Sunday, April 25

Last day to see the mixed media exhibition "Spoonful Discard" by Marc Cosico and Don Salubayba. They use such materials as melted and distorted plastic spoons and phone cards for their artwork. You are in for a unique viewing experience. Only at the CCP Bulwagang Fernando Amorsolo (Small Gallery). For inquiries, dial 832-1125 to 39.

Monday, April 26

Catch the sixth day of "White Nights: Visions of an Insomniac" by artist/art critic Cid

SUMMER/ H4

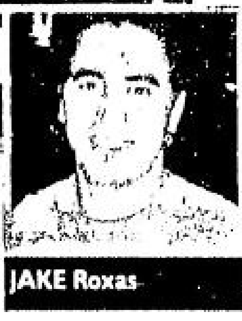
KARA Tolentino, Miguel Rosales and Jordan Castro

ARA Mina, Nivea's boss Rica King and Jomari Yllana

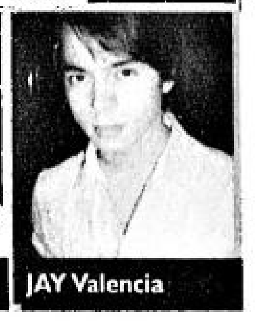
NATALIE Tarin and Borgy Manotoc

MS PHILIPPINES Earth beauties

ALVIN Alfonso, Myrza Sison, Edward Mendez



JAKE Roxas



JAY Valencia

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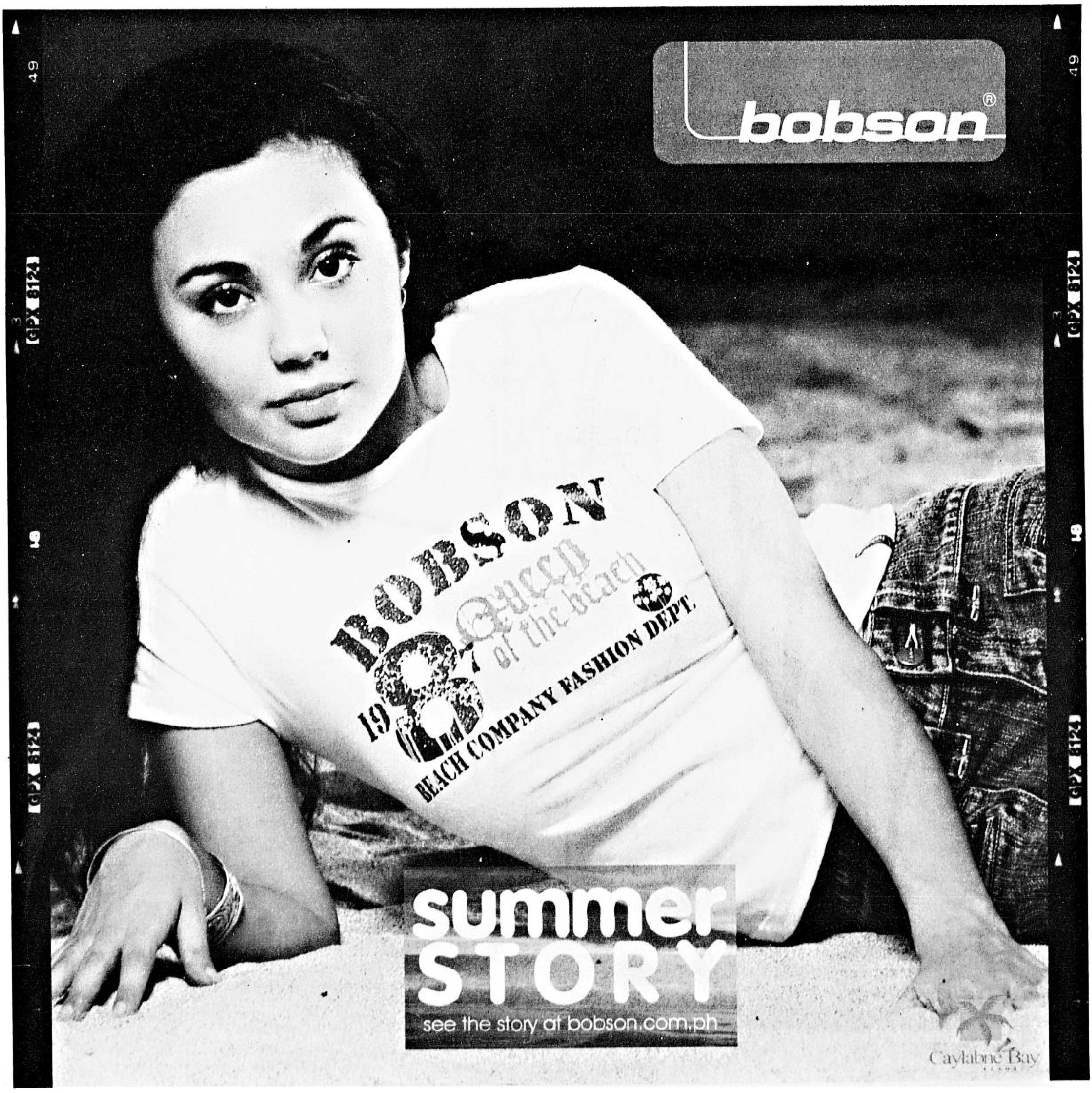

Twice in a lifetime

New dogs, old tricks—today's music apes the past, so how will the future sound?

MYSTERIOUS HURL. Peter Andre in 1996 (left) and in 2004 (right). Can you spot the difference?

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

IT'S ALMOST like a Gen-Y version of the Kennedy assassination. Today's teens and twentysomethings—at least those who lived within earshot of mid-'90s UK pop music—remember where they were, what they were up to, and how their lives changed when a certain dude named Peter Andre shot up the charts with "Mysterious Girl" in 1996.

Well, it seems we just snapped out of the nightmare, but it's been eight years, three "Scream" movies, and a couple of boyband breakups since that moment of helplessness. Why are our collective radars still picking up Andre's balls-in-a-vice-grip singing voice?

The answer is as spine-chilling as the thought of Jessica Simpson running the world: the above mentioned Australian himbo was back on top of the pop heap yet again. Not only that, he ruled the roost not with a brand-new piece of piddle or a shit-awful remix. He was *numero uno* with exactly the same song. That's right, kids, time to slit that other wrist.

Resembling an adamant cockroach, "Mysterious Girl" was at it once more, proving how outrageously lame the British charts can get with the combination of hackneyed lyrics ("Ooh mysterious girl / I wanna get close to you...") and stale tactics (bare torsos, wet bikinis, and token Jamaican rap solos). Andre's assault on pop culture was traumatic for us the first time around. Why do we have to go through that again? Maybe it's just me, but I've been witnessing a load of uninspired re-purposing in popular music lately. Isn't once in a lifetime enough?

Reheat and serve

Notwithstanding that Dork from Down Under, other acts have likewise adopted a pseudo-ecological approach to career resuscitation—reducing creativity, reusing recent material, and recycling themselves. In 1998, Tamia dropped her single "So Into You," which hit the Top 10 of Billboard's R&B chart. It was quite expected, considering that the jam was real easy on the eardrums. Five years later, however, the dubiously talented Fabolous headlined a track featuring Tamia—imaginatively titled "Into You"—that sounded just like the '98 original but with a rap refrain thrown into the mix. It was a clear case of radio déjà vu.

Another cover that was an exercise in pointlessness was 2002's "Someday We'll Know" by Mandy Moore, featuring Jonathan Foreman. A memorable New Radicals modern rock hit from '99, the song was restyled as a duet for the soundtrack of "A Walk to Remember.". Needless to say, the real thing blows the wussy remake out of the water. It still baffles me why they didn't use the New Radicals version instead; the song was hardly vintage and deserved a bit more time before a can-do karaoke tribute.

Washed-up pop stars in need of a more extreme overhaul sometimes derive inspiration from clubland and mark their artificial rebirth with a remix. Word has it that Vanilla Ice had been trying to smear some go-ninja-go mojo on his one-hit wonder status as early as, well, the early '90s. He gunned, in vain, for lateral expansion by adjusting his trademark chart topper to suit the grunge sensibilities of the time. We can only shudder at how that must've sounded. But it was only three years ago that he finally found a serious bankroller. With its generic tech-house backbeat, "Ice, Ice Baby" 2001 Remix by ReAnimator featuring Vanilla Ice trgically never made it anywhere. Reinvention is vital to the biz, but sometimes classics are better off without the makeovers. You heard, Hammer?

New dogs, old tricks

It's not a stretch to say that the prevailing trend in our post-everything times has been to copy what has already been done and pull tradition up to speed with eclectic touches. In that case, how does one label the box intended for fresh-faced youth whose voices reveal Shaolin-monk wisdom? Borrowing the title of a Tricky track from 1998, it's "Brand New, You're Retro."

I CAN hear dead people. The late greats Eva Cassidy and Nick Drake.

Releasing international records based on golden oldies, several young musicians—including Jamie Cullum, Joss Stone, Peter Cincotti, and Rachael Yamagata—are crossing over to a speaker near you. With an average age of 21, the squad does away with the poetic pretensions of previous generations by cherry-picking unlikely tunes and serving them up high-low style. Cullum, for instance, performs his piano lounge take of Radiohead's "High and Dry" in ratty Chuck Taylors and beat-up jeans. Stone, on the other hand, is barefoot in the video for her debut "Fell In Love With A Boy," a rehash of the White Stripes' "Fell In Love With A Girl." Cincotti and Yamagata, for their part, are already being pegged as "Frank Sinatra for the Junior Set" and "the next Norah Jones," respectively. In a way, all of them are re-mastering a particular brand of sophistication for a younger generation that's only discovering the joy of Bellinis and dressing up. Given that, however, the question begs to be asked: What's so wrong with the original Frank Sinatra and Norah Jones?

In a world of round-the-clock Britney, Chingy, and Pharell, I have to admit that the genuine vocal talent these new dogs bring to the table is refreshing. With everyone recognizing the huge crossover potential of this talent-borrows-genius-steals school of music, how long would it take before the confident upward trajectory starts slowing down? In the '90s, Harry Connick Jr. was marketed as "the new Frank Sinatra" and, a moment ago, so was the now-overhyped Michael Bublé. (Even 16-year-old Jon Stevens from "American Idol" croons like he's 300 years old; another Sinatra?) Compared to our age demographic's previous approval of the Spice Girls, cultivating a palate for a classier kind of muzak can certainly be considered a coming-of-age highlight. Nevertheless, if the present merely continues to ape the past, then that surely doesn't bode well for the future.

Re-imagine all the people

Serendipitously, I found several antitheses to reprocessed music a couple years back and, ironically, I stumbled upon them on the WB. Tuning into the pilot episode of the short-lived series, "Young Americans," in July 2000, I was magnetized by a low-key and ethereal lullaby that was tugging in the background: Nick Drake's "Northern Sky." The show was wide-eyed and ebullient, so the song's pleasant melancholy was an interesting contrast. Two years down the line, I came across Eva Cassidy; her tender rendition of Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time" made it to one episode of "Smallville," the teen "Superman" prequel. Moved by their earnest musical chops, I dug up some info about them: Drake was a tormented British singer-songwriter, Cassidy was a thirtysomething American musician, and both of them had long bit the dust. That shook me up since, well, they sounded very now. Two other artists with a perfectly-timed coolness about them—Elliott Smith and Johnny Cash—also kicked it eventually. Is posthumous rock an emerging music genre?

Those musicians were gifted one-offs; it sucks they're no longer with us. Thankfully though, not all brilliant musicians have dropped dead. Our pre-millennial tension made us worship such trip-hop revolutionaries as Massive Attack, Portishead, and Björk, before she wore that hideous swan dress. But where have all those iconoclasts gone? They're just off the beam for now, I guess. In their place, under the current muck of commercialism, nostalgia, and lethargy, one can still find hope. The UK is on the rebound with inner city b-boy Dizzee Rascal and the soothing urbanity of Zero 7. Australia has the smart hip-hop of Jessy Moss, and France has got the flow with the cosmopolitan pop and soul of Corneille. Sick of The Strokes, American hipsters are rediscovering Israel Kamakiwiwo'Ole who, in my mind, is the biggest-deal musician to come out of Hawaii. (And yup, his "Over The Rainbow" was also featured in "Young Americans.") The spanking energy of discovering those acts chewed me up and spat me right out.

What's more, the buzz led me to mull our generation, which some have already dubbed "Generation Esque" because of our fondness for throwbacks, cover versions, and second takes. For a group that pursues its own esoteric paths, we're seriously bereft of original idols; the dismal state of pop music drives that point home. Historical trendspotting has proven that stuff comes into style every 20 years but my personal connecting-the-dots shows the stretch has downsized. Is it due to a lack of inspiration, a blasé outlook, or both? Whatever it is, this bout of un-imagination will go down as the Big Bang Theory in reverse, where things move in an extremely compressed linear time frame. It would be a shame to be branded as good-looking but derivative youth, wouldn't it? If our generation doesn't spur itself out of this creative standstill, we should expect even more phenomena of the Peter Andre variety. When that happens, we surely won't leave anything distinct in the world with the exception, perhaps, of the phrase "heard it all before."

Summer Project . . .

From page H3

Reyes. This collection of abstracts is drawn mostly in white and occasionally dotted with colorful calligraphic specks. The works are on display at the West Gallery, 4/L SM Megamall A.

Tuesday, April 27

Noel Barrameda's works are up for viewing in "Altered Light," a collection of manipulated photographs of religious images in the province of Iloilo. This print exhibit is located at the lobby Art Café of the Inter-Continental Hotel Manila. While you're there, you must not miss dining at the fabulous Prince Albert.

Wednesday, April 28

Witness the opening of the photo exhibit of Rolly Rodriquez Soliven at the Rockwell Power Plant Lobby. "Be Still..." is a fundraising event that will benefit cancer-stricken children at the Kythe Foundation. So, if you have the dough and the artistic eye, perhaps you have a heart, too.

Thursday, April 29

"Goodlife Thursdays" is always good with forever-in-demand Steve Mills. Relax or groove to smooth R&B music over your favorite cocktails at Temple Bar and Restaurant in Greenbelt 2. Game people can just show up—doubtful ones can try calling 757-4813.

Friday, April 30

The legendary Andrea Bocelli is actually coming here for a one-night performance! Tickets are a little expensive (Patron seats at P25,000) but that is expected. given the vocal caliber of the artist. The concert will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the Ticketnet (911-5555).

Saturday, May 1

This night was originally reserved for Hed Kandi. Change of plans. Don't know about you, but it's definitely a switch to a higher level. "Big Love," BIGFISH's tribute to the dance vibe that has been pulsing through Manila for years, will gather the best local DJs to perform in one night. Manolet Dario, David Jacob, Jon Naval, Benjo Marquez, Chip de la Calzada, Nicky Jurado and, of course, TC cannot possibly disappoint. At The Tent, 8 p.m. Look for flyers or check out www.bigfishmanila.com

The Word for the Bored:

Carmen Electra and Natasha Henstridge were both asked who they'd pick, should they both find themselves suddenly lesbian-inclined.

Carmen: "I would definitely go with an Angelina type."

Natasha: "Angelina Jolie, absolutely—she's pure sex appeal."

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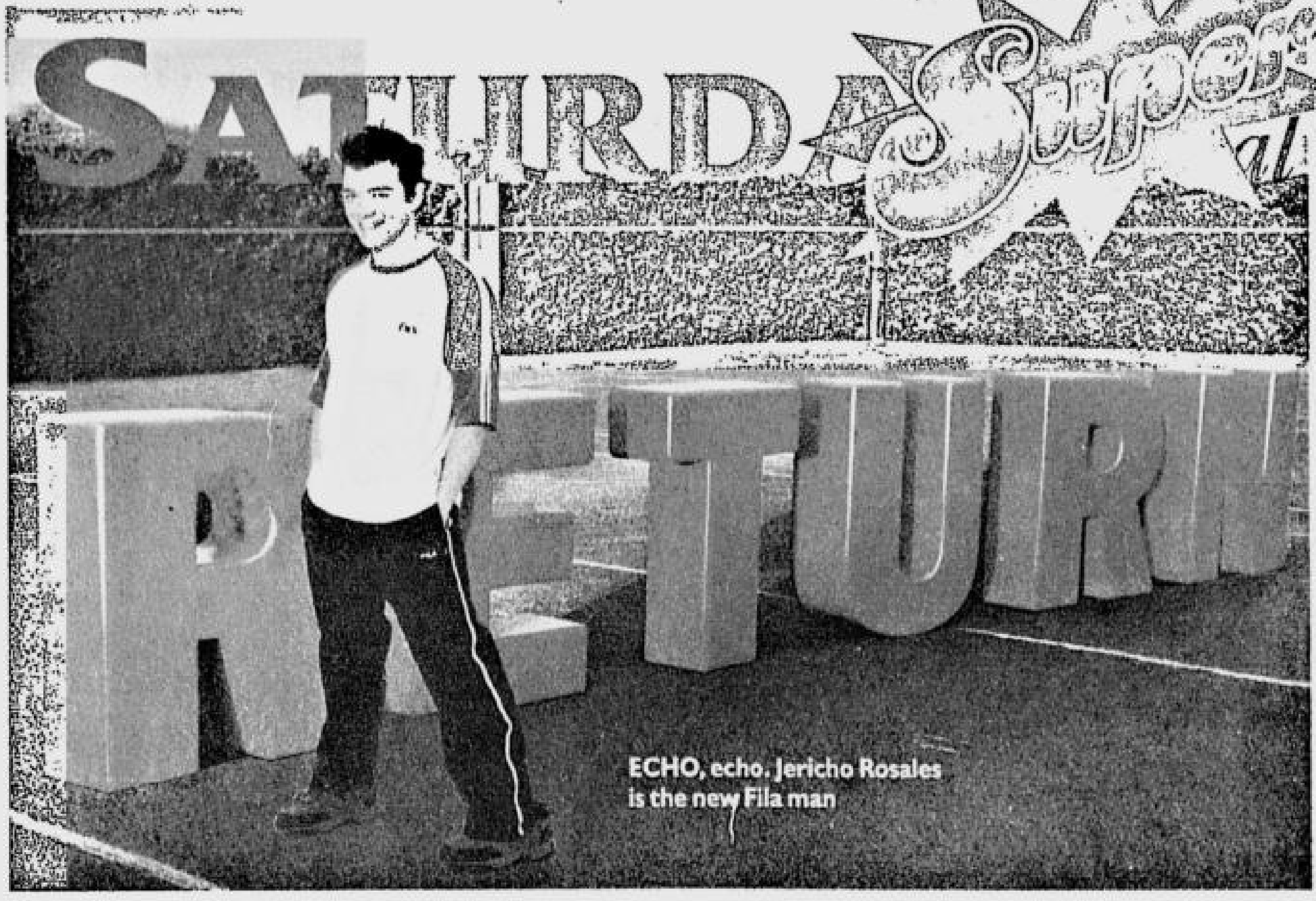
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ECHO, echo. Jericho Rosales is the new Fila man

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Fila on the fast lane

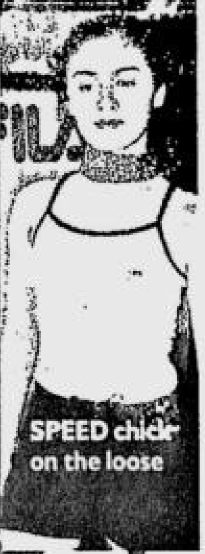
MOST men would want to wrap their legs around this baby. Nope, not any of the life-sized Viva Hot Babes pillows now out in the market. We're referring to the Ducati motorbike, considered the Ferrari on two wheels.

Recognizing the power of this sexy machine, Fila teamed up with Ducati for the 2004 shoe collection appropriately named Fila Ducati.

Ducati bikers in the Philippines, about 300 of them, were invited to crash the party with their sexy beasts. In the spotlight was the one and only Fila Ducati bike in the Philippines, among a limited worldwide edition of only 200 bikes. Pretty Fila Ducati girls dressed in the latest Fila wear kept the party going 'til early morning, marking the beginning of the campaign.

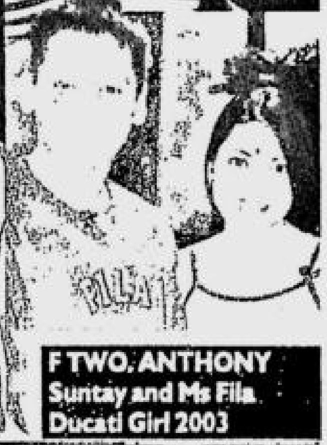
Poster boy for this exciting merger is Jericho Rosales. The new collection will be out in stores this April.

DRIVING Miss D. Donita Rose

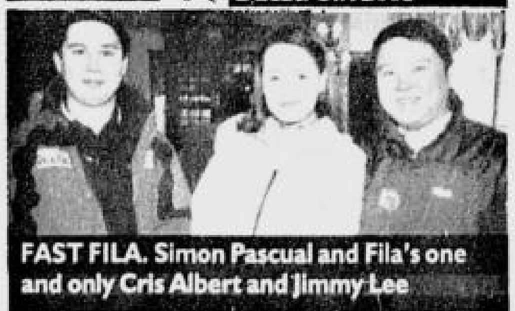


SPEED chick on the loose

FAST freak. Mike Potenciano



F TWO. ANTHONY Suntay and Ms Fila Ducati Girl 2003



FAST FILA. Simon Pascual and Fila's one and only Cris Albert and Jimmy Lee

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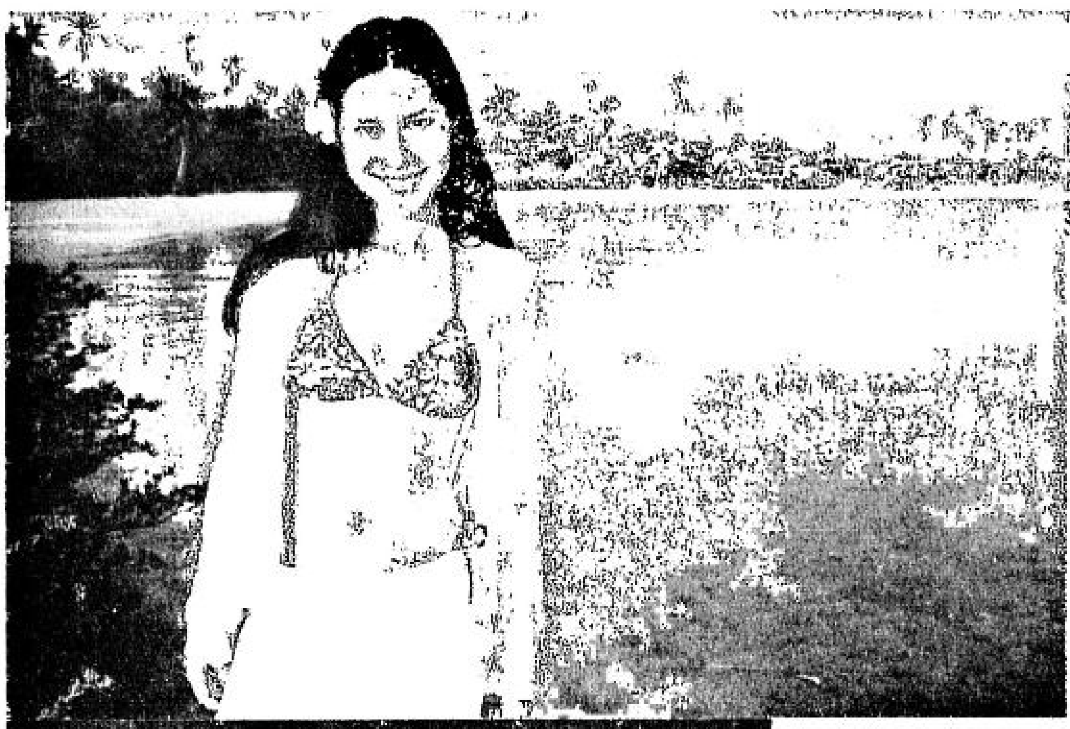
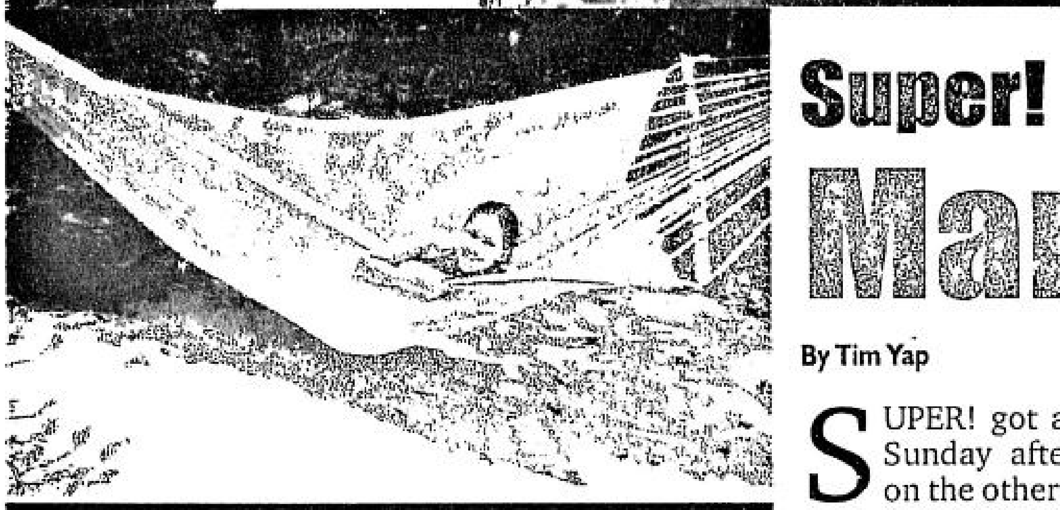


BUKIDNON Rep. Miguel Zubiri's sunset kiss from fiancé Audrey



Super! scoop:

Marrying Migu

By Tim Yap

SUPER! got a phone call last Sunday afternoon. The girl on the other line sounded ecstatic.

"Guess what?" she said. We could picture her excitement from the sound of her voice. Something was about to change her life.

"Don't tell us you're getting married!" we second-guessed the blushing media muse who grew up right before our eyes as a model turned veejay.

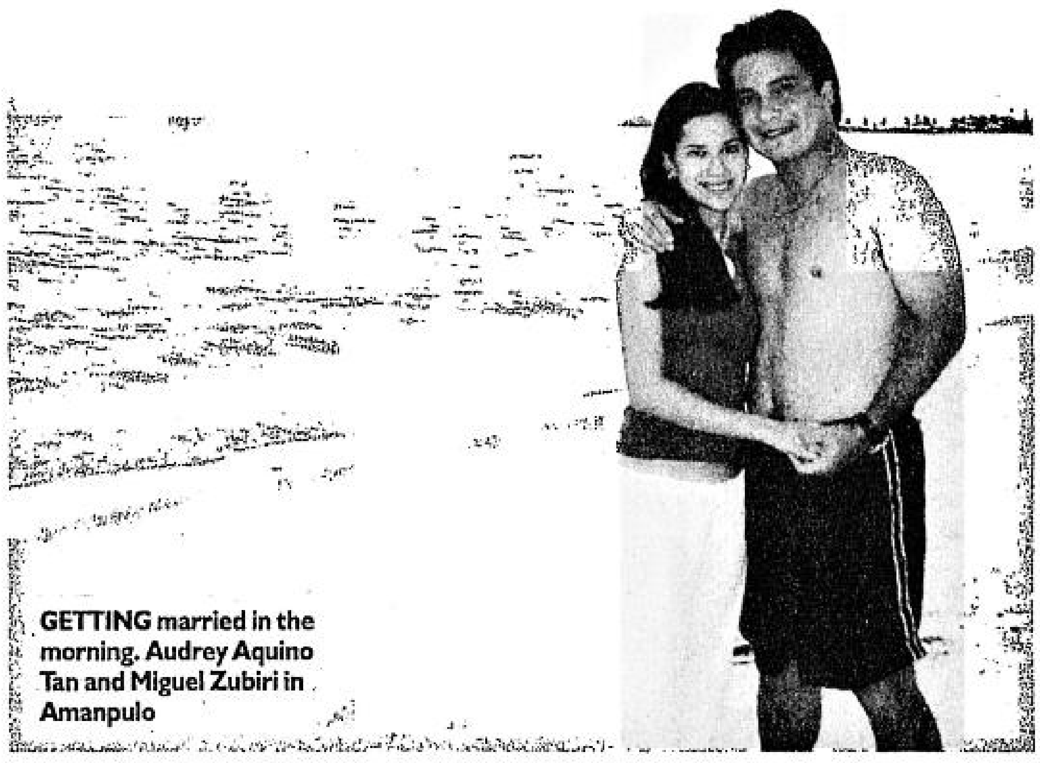
"Eeeeeeek!" she shrieked. Yes baby, one of Manila's most eligible bachelors will soon cease to be a bachelor. Miguel Zubiri is finally getting married—to Studio 23 VJ Audrey Tan.

"It was our second year anniversary and his birthday last April 13," she recounted. "We were all supposed to go to Bora. But on our way to the airport, he surprised me by turning left into a private hangar where a plane was waiting to take us to Amanpulo."

There they celebrated with an intimate dinner on the beach, complete with bonfire, candles, lanterns, and pillows on the sand. Oh, and did we mention that there was also a guy serenading them? And we thought this only happened in the movies.

Audrey couldn't resist gushing over her fiancé. "As the sun set, Miguel said he was going to read a poem that he had written," she shared. "It took him two weeks to write it, he said, adding a new line every night."

She reacted by doing the first thing that came to mind. She... applauded. To that, Miguel said, "Is that all I get? Can I get a kiss as well?"



GETTING married in the morning. Audrey Aquino Tan and Miguel Zubiri in Amanpulo

So she gave him a kiss, and just as she put her arms around him in a dance, Miguel got down on one knee: "I'm gonna ask you a question first. Will you marry me?"

Audrey cried and cried, while Miguel stood there, bewildered, wondering if she was crying for the right reasons.

"So is it a yes?" he asked.

Apparently, and thankfully, it was. He put the ring on her finger. On cue, the song "All My Life" started to play.

Then they both started crying. Suddenly, Miguel screamed "We're getting married!" to all four people in the three-kilometer stretch of white sand.

Since Audrey, a fresh college grad, is set to leave for Spain where she will stay for eight months, the big day is tentatively set for next summer or Christmas.

Porn again

DEAR Man About Town,

Recently, while using my fiancée's computer when he was away on a business trip, I made an unsettling discovery. I was looking for an old file when I came across a whole library of pornographic material stashed in a hidden folder. He had at least a hundred video clips and even more picture files. I only browsed a few of them before I turned the computer off—I was too disturbed to continue. I don't think he has ever cheated on me and he has always acted the perfect gentleman, so I never suspected he was into this sort of thing. He even categorized them alphabetically! Is this normal?

I was 10 years old when a classmate brought a stack of "special" playing cards to school. Each card depicted a different picture of the female figure in the nude, some with several women in suggestive poses. The Ace of Spades, in particular, left an indelible image in my prepubescent brain. To this day, I cannot draw that card without breaking into a royal flush.

What is pornography, anyway? "Explicit pictures, writing, or other material whose primary purpose is to cause sexual arousal" is a general definition. But such a vague description allows for various interpretations. It may differ from epoch to epoch, from culture to culture, from gender to gender, and most definitely from individual to individual. The works of Anais Nin and the Marquis de Sade where considered too obscene for public consumption at their printing, but today they are considered classics. The Erotic Museum in Pigalle, Paris, featuring a modified chair equipped with a revolving "seat tongue" (you gotta love the French) is considered an institution of exotic art. In short, there may be a little corner in this world where your boyfriend would be considered a librarian connoisseur of visual erotica, instead of a pervert.

Man about town

Chuck Dy

Most men, if not all, encounter pornography of varying degrees during their lifetime. There are scientific surveys and psychological profiling studies that support this, but even personal experience will sufficiently attest to this. Go ahead, ask all the men that you know who are not comatose, sainted or living in the Kalahari Desert whether or not they have flipped through a skin mag. It's a good bet that they have. Even that rare breed of male who, cowed by superstition or feminism, attempts to avoid sexually explicit material, will have invariably received that rogue e-mail with the lurid attachment. Yesterday, I opened one such accidental correspondence innocently named, "Big Mac." I am still cleaning the vomit off my keyboard.

Whether this is normal or not is a moot point. The fact that most men have indulged in pornography signifies not normalcy, but popularity. And let's keep morality out of this argument—it is a given that Jesus would never check out the Paris Hilton video. The question being tackled here concerns the underlying implications of a man, in a seemingly fulfilling relationship, still collating Tera Patrick pictorials and Jenna Jameson movie clips (my friends swear these are all famous porn stars—I wouldn't know). Does his predilection for smut indicate an infidelity of sorts, dissatisfaction on the sexual front, or just a strange perversity fermenting within the cauldron of his twisted being? Evil laughter and a crack of lightning…

DIGITAL ARTWORK BY MARTIN VALDES

TRACI: Lord of the Schwiing

In the strictest sense, as long as his sex drive remains inside the hard drive, he is not cheating on you, right? If you consider observation to be unfaithfulness, then you are about to embark on a life of paranoia. But I admit, it doesn't seem to be consistent with the idea of a loyal partner for him to be visually traipsing through a virtual realm of painfully personal pulchritude when he's got you, babe. Unless you're extremely unsightly and he's attracted only to your personality, he doesn't have much of an excuse. The occasional excursion into porn *is* excusable only as far as it illustrates a healthy curiosity and a natural fascination for what we don't usually see in public, but an excess of Hustler magazines in his underwear drawer could mean trouble.

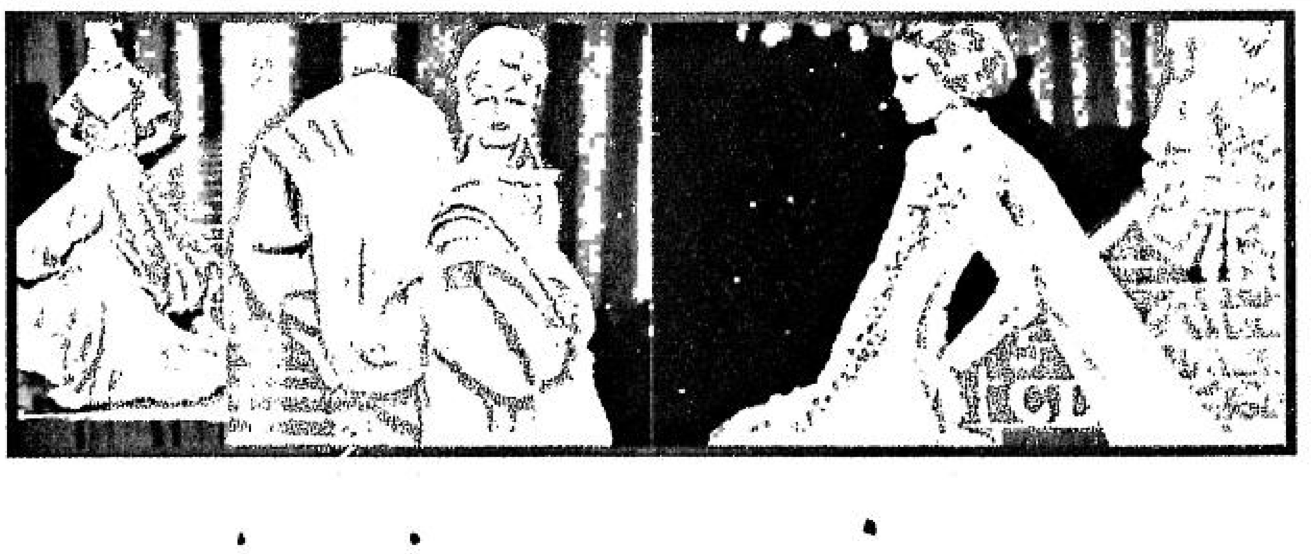
The final consideration focuses on your partner's mental state. He treats you like a princess, becomes intimate with you in dizzying permutations, and yet manages to find the time to download hours of smut. Thus you suspect that he may be depraved, and you wonder how this will affect your future together and how much of it your offspring will inherit. Once again, a collection of porn does not translate into lunacy, just too much testosterone. But if his private assortment includes some of the less natural or legal sexual fetishes, then you may want to reconsider that honeymoon in Cancun. If there are clips of livestock, cadavers, minors or relatives, you may have a problem. If there are lots and lots of pictures of men with no women, you *do* have a problem.

Go ahead, ask all the men that you know whether or not they have flipped through a skin mag

Ultimately, you are going to have to confront your man, if you decide this is something that really disturbs you. When you do this, be ready to defend your discovery which he will interpret as a violation of privacy. The threat of reciprocity, though vulgar, may be an effective deterrent. How would he like it if you started your own tribute to John Holmes? I wouldn't advise public humiliation ("I'm dating a deviant" T-shirts available nowadays) as this should remain a discreet matter. Communicate your discomfort to him and try to come to some compromise: if he cuts down on the porn, you'll purchase your own computer.

At the end of the day, porn is just a pack of cards with naked women on them. You can choose to confiscate them or learn to play the game. Will a porn-less man become a better boyfriend? I wouldn't know. I haven't been caught yet.

(E-mail author at bohemiansamurai@yahoo.com)



Very exclusive affair

EXPECT nothing but the chic-est and grandest events from this magazine.

Carrying on this tradition of fabulous sorties, the Philippine Tatler, headed by Irene Martel Francisco and Anton San Diego, are hosting yet another must-attend party, Couture magazine's Spring/Summer 2004 show.

Couture is the definitive fashion guide of every *fashionista* and designer. The magazine features colorful runway photos from New York, Milan and Paris; collections and profiles of the most notable and stellar names. A big bonus is backstage access to all the hoopla that happens during Fashion Week.

The very exclusive event is set on April 29, 2004, 6:30 p.m., at the Lobby Lounge of Shangri-La Makati. It will feature the spring/summer 2004 collections of Hugo Boss, Narciso Rodriguez, Salvatore Ferragamo, Valentino Roma, Vera Wang and Yves Saint Laurent with jewelry from Bulgari and Cartier.

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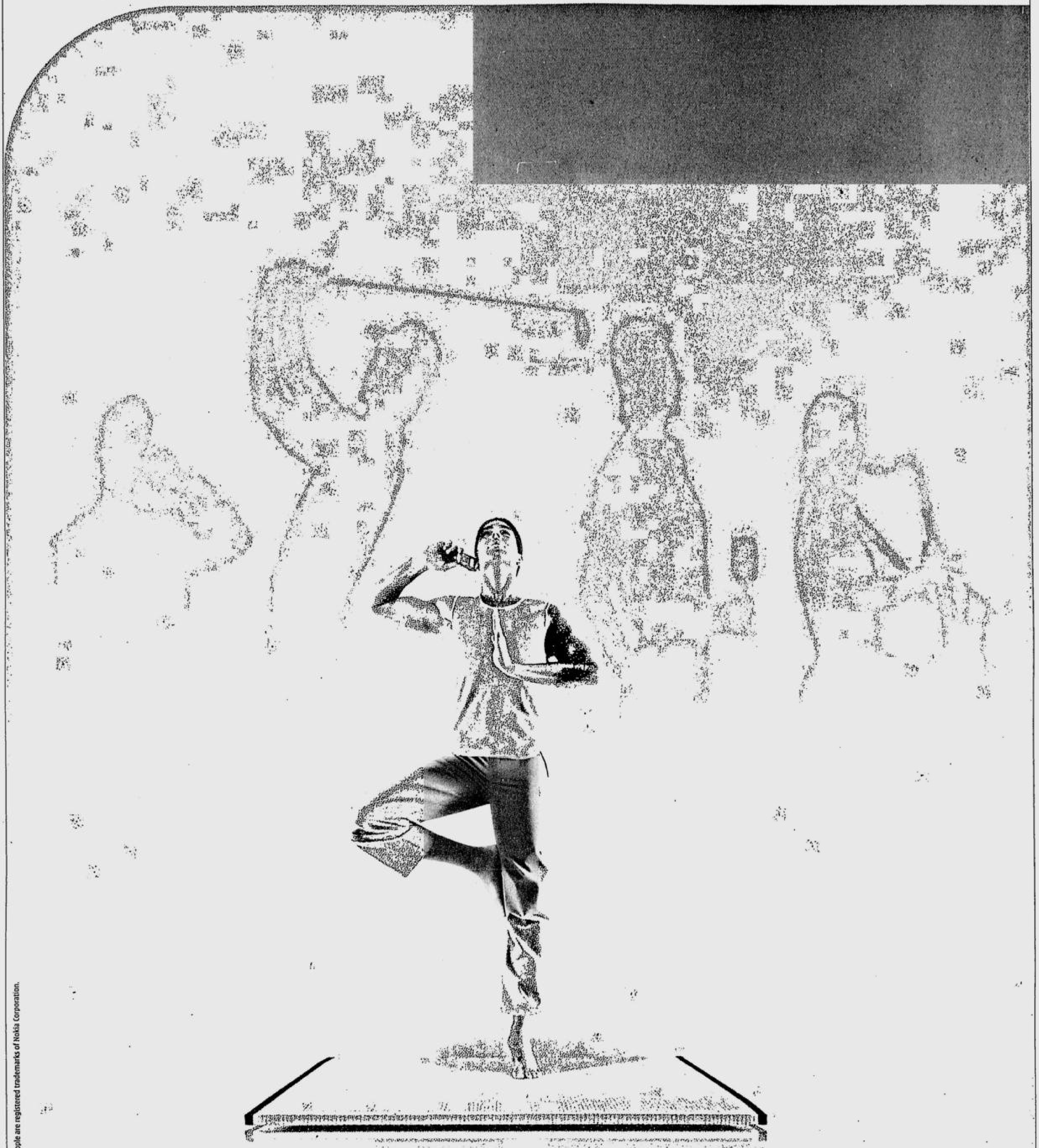

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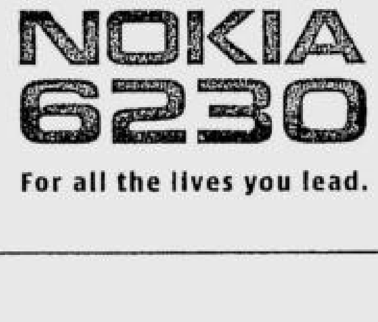

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'Newsmakers,' movers and shakers

By Marge C. Enriquez

The hybrid of media and celebrity has created a culture of cliques and prodigious backslapping

TWELVE years ago, I was struck by a column that pointed out a trend: the hybrid of journalism and celebrity in media, or treating newsmen (and newshens) as the "newsmakers." Fashion has since been fused into this.

A columnist pointed out the blur between self-promotion and writing an essay in the first person. He attributed the trend to the way news has come to be presented as entertainment. Ergo, the purveyor of news gets equal attention as his subject. Whatever happened to journalism's role as the conscience of society or the mirror of the times? My friends take pot shots at some turks who hold up the mirror at their own image and say, "Ain't I cute?" If there's this self-indulgence and defensiveness, how can they make the readers understand the significance of events or trends?

The crossbreeding of fashion, media and celebrity has created a culture of cliques and prodigious backslapping. I can't figure out how so many faces in the columns and magazines become fit to print or be in the list of Who's Who or outstanding talents. What are their qualifications to become newsworthy subjects aside from schmoozing with the press? To me, the media has hyped averagely well-dressed men and women and mediocre talents into being looked upon as style setters or icons that the public should admire. Many become product endorsers while still green in their profession. My friends observe that their faces are constantly recycled in the society columns and magazine covers.

There's a slew of young writers and editors who never had to work their way up, so they never understood the agenda of professional journalism and didn't suffer third-degree burns from their mentors. In my time, journalists did multiple takes with their sources, repeatedly checked their facts, lost sleep honing their lead paragraphs, and hoped to change the world.

15 minutes

Today, a popular aspiration is to be photographed in a tiny bikini and get tons of email and text messages. The media has cultivated a culture of approval-seeking. The goal is to get what Warhol described as "15 minutes of fame."

Former society page fixture **Dieter Schrottman** observes: "Nowadays it's about seeking public recognition (rather) than having personal integrity. It's all about looks and what other people think."

I'm not writing this from the nostalgia of a displaced generation of baby boomers, but as someone who has been exposed to traditional journalistic values and ethics and who is now seeing these mangled like a badly deconstructed gown.

Like fashion itself, its reportage is neither proficient nor new. A prominent local designer was forthright about the lack of background and research in the coverage of fashion events. Some writers and editors bristled at his comments, but there was some truth in it.

Both fashion designers and writers, with all their funky ideas, have been working on popularity rather than credibility. The inescapable truth is, they have to earn the public trust by constantly working, continuously learning from others, and establishing a solid understanding of the craft.

Ready-to-wear labels and inexperienced writers share the penchant for conformity and predictability. Consumers have limited options; readers get limited viewpoints. Go to a store and you can't tell one label from another. Leaf through the publications and note the uniformity of perspectives. It seems that the world has stopped churning out purposeful pursuits and opportunities for original thinking.

I'm also amazed at the diminishing reverence for the craft and its values. Designers tend to make wacky clothes with little consideration for longevity and practicality. In the same token, writers today apparently think they can do whatever they please without realizing the consequence of their work.

Fancy copy

On fashion writing, their idea of pushing journalistic boundaries is flashing a fancy copy that means nothing. In truth, fashion journalism is potentially ugly. I have seen the repugnant side and heard of the unethical practices of "newsmakers" pictured by media as the coolest and trendiest on the planet. Writers have raved with exaggerated adjectives over industry practitioners who, in reality, have mediocre skills and attitude problems.

I have also witnessed the crab mentality and factions in the industry that have kept us from progressing. Yet the media cannot be critical about it because of their financial dependence on the industry. I have met representatives of big brands that project a glamorous, sometimes holier-than-thou, image when in reality they are uncouth in their dealings. Where's the beauty there? I've clashed with overbearing public relations people who only pushed their clients' interests, completely disregarding the journalists' ethics and that their loyalty is, foremost, to the public and his/her news organization.

I once I tried to start an in-depth piece about an industry practitioner who frequently duped his suppliers. Nobody wanted to talk, although the tales were loud and clear. I guess this accounts for the success of self-promotion and celebrity journalism. Aside from the lack of incentives for hard work, it's almost effortless—no need to cross-check facts or consult a lawyer for possibly libelous statements. Plus, public recognition is easy to get.

My friends liken instant media celebrities to bean sprouts. They peak quickly, and just as quickly perish, because their roots find no solid ground.

****

In today's media, the term "movers and shakers" is used liberally, with little or no understanding of its implications. The phrase is often applied to the elite in glamorous jobs, who wear creaseless clothes and flash photographic smiles. Genuine movers and shakers take huge risks and beat a path that no one has trodden. Because they are introducing new ideas or challenging existing norms, it is difficult for them to win supporters.

Honestly, every time I see yet another Movers and Shakers list, I toss it to the trash bin. Who are they kidding? Contrary to perception, movers and shakers are lonely because society thinks they're crazy. But they're needed to rescue society from blandness and mediocrity.

Brothers **Audie** and **Joey Espino** of Runway Productions talk about the challenges of organizing Philippine Fashion Week. Although it is a long way from the standards of even the Hong Kong version, the Espinos are slowly proving that there is a fashion industry in this country. If only Filipinos could deal with their egos and unite ....

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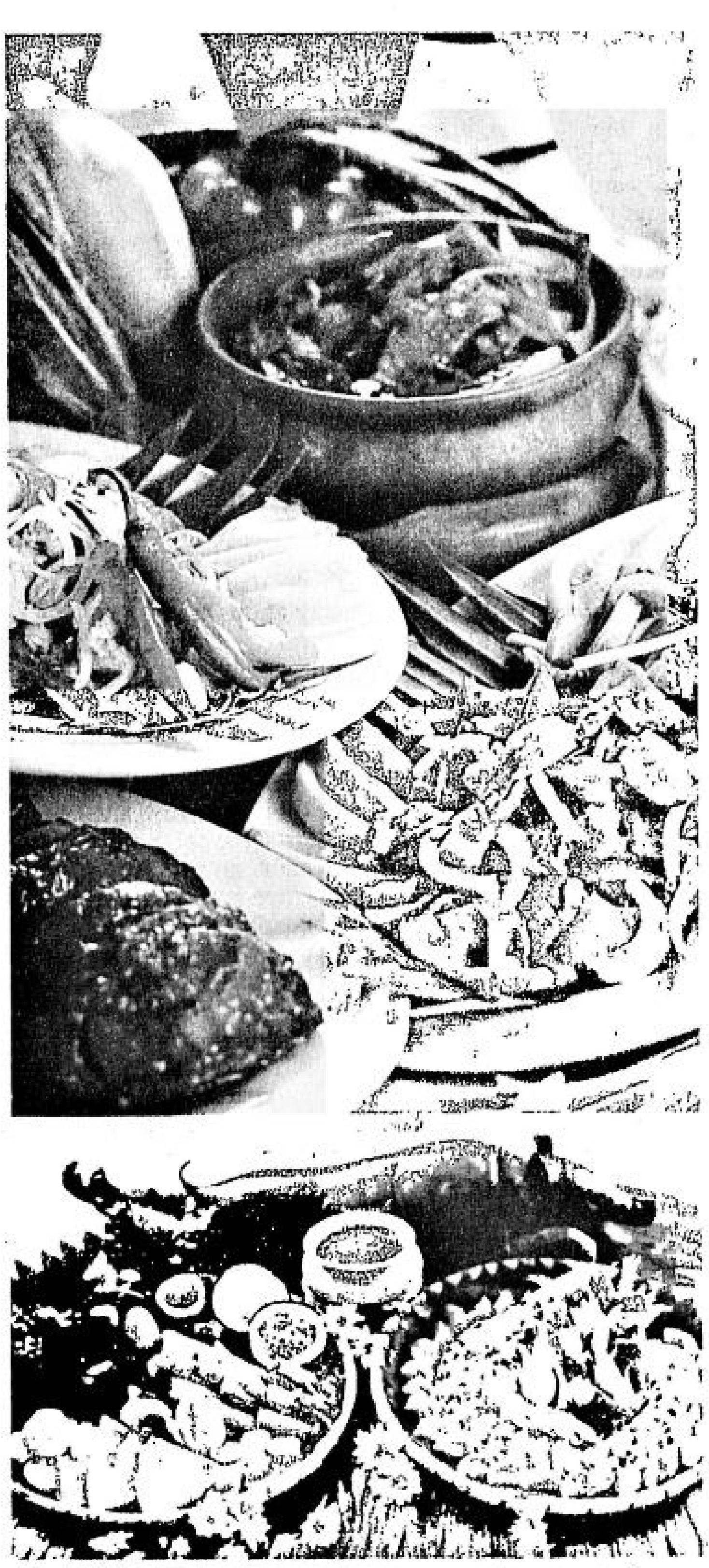
A serenade of flavors



CONTRARY to popular perception, Filipino cookery is not all white rice and brown viands.

A melting pot of Eastern and Western influences, Philippine cuisine is as eclectic as its islands and as distinctive as its dialects.

The Malaysians and Indonesians introduced coconut-based foods and peanut sauces. The Chinese introduced noodles, subtle flavors and mixing courses in one plate. The Arabians and Indians brought a variety of spices and food plants. The Spaniards brought Mediterranean spices and indulged our penchant for rich flavors, thick stews.

The Filipino palate asserts itself by blending the familiar with the exotic to form one unique identity. An example is the use of tamarind, mango, and guava instead of plain vinegar or the substitution of salt and fish sauce with *bagoong* (fish or shrimp paste).

Adobo, perhaps the best known Filipino dish, comes from a Spanish pickling sauce made with olive oil, vinegar, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, oregano, paprika and salt. Filipinos selected their favorites--vinegar, garlic, bay leaf--among these spices, added peppercorns and soy sauce, and used it as a stewing base for chicken and/or pork.

Local cuisine the way Filipinos like it, with the complete meal laid out so that assorted flavors can be enjoyed simultaneously, will be highlighted in Garden Café's "Harana" which runs through May 2.

There will be a groaning table of entrees such as fresh grilled *sugpo* (prawns), *rebosadong hipon* (shrimps sautéed in butter), *pinangat na salmon* (salmon in vinegar sauce), *kalderetang baka* (beef braised in tomato sauce with cheese and bellpeppers), and tuna *sisig* (sizzling tuna with garlic and soya sauce),

The buffet also features familiar appetizers, such as *lumpiang ubod* (fresh vegetable rolls), *tamis-anghang na danggit* (sweet and sour dried fish), and *rellenong bangus* (milkfish stuffed with potatoes and raisins). *Leche flan* (milk and egg custard), *buko* salad (coconut salad with fruits), and *brazo de Mercedes* are just some of the desserts.

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The wonders of Danjugan

Exploring this haven offers a glimpse of its equally rich and varied wildlife, including the endangered white-breasted sea eagles

By Teddy Y. Montelibano
Contributor

I HAD long heard of the wonders of Danjugan Island—this uninhabited marine and wildlife sanctuary in the Sulu Sea, three kilometers west of Negros Occidental—and so when an invitation to visit the place came recently, I accepted right away. Seeing the pristine island made me marvel about that part of the country. How could I have been so oblivious to such breathtaking natural beauty right in the Western Visayas province that is the place of my birth?

Gerry Ledesma, the man largely responsible for transforming Danjugan into a protected sanctuary, picked me up at the airport in Bacolod, capital city of Negros Occidental. He was garbed in his usual t-shirt and shorts and had brought along his wife, the former Pamel Coscolluela. We lost no time in heading for Bulata, the coastal barangay in Cauayan town some 152 kilometers south of Bacolod that is the take-off point to Danjugan.

The drive took two hours and a half over good roads. We encountered a heavy downpour midway, but by the time we got to the place of Junie Lizares, Ledesma's cousin, in Bulata, the weather had cleared considerably.

We boarded a motorized dinghy for the 20-minute crossing to Danjugan, specifically towards Typhoon Beach, a coral ruble and white-sand clearing on the western side of the island. This was to be our base for the next two days.

My first sight of Danjugan, set as it was against a steely silver afternoon sky tinged with soft hues of red and gold reflected in the clear waters, took my breath away.

Barefoot on the cool beach and taking in the sweeping view, I thought, "This is sheer magic." It was enveloped in stillness—and then, suddenly, a trill, followed by the sound of wings flapping.

Ledesma, standing a short distance away from me, pointed at the avian acrobat gliding gracefully through space up in the sky and said, "You bring good vibes." The white-breasted sea eagle stretched its wings to an arch as it flew from its aerie atop a tall tree behind Typhoon Beach. Beaming, my host said, "Look, it came out to greet you."

At that precise moment, I just felt so right and so at home.

Inhabitants

Danjugan is small—about 1.5 kilometers long and half a kilometer wide. It is comprised of lush tropical forest cover, five lagoons, beach and mangrove forests, seagrass beds and coral reefs. Altogether, this ecosystem hosts a plethora of living things, which include the endangered white-breasted sea eagle and tabon scrub fowl, at least 70 other bird species, nine fruit and insect-eating bat species, and over 20 butterfly species.

Close to 600 fish species belonging to 139 genera, including snapper, grouper, and emperor as well as the endangered and threatened giant manta ray, napoleon wrasse and whale sharks, can be found in these waters and surrounding reefs. A *dugong* (sea cow) was earlier spotted, whale sharks a couple of times, and dolphins are periodically sighted in the waters of nearby Cauayan.

Of at least 244 hard corals (sclerectinians) found in Danjugan's coral reefs, 20 species are considered rare. In these reefs have been observed such commercially important marine invertebrates as spiny lobster and giant clams of which an endangered specie—Tridacna gigas—is the subject of a restocking program in collaboration with the University of the Philippines' Marine Science Institute.

Seventeen mangrove species thrive in Danjugan's coastal and mangrove forests, where endangered coconut crabs have also been sighted. Likewise, the beach on the island's western side are known nesting sites for hawksbill and green Chelonia mydas turtles.

Comparisons

Extensive survey around Danjugan by United Kingdom-based Coral Cay Conservation (CCC) volunteers, have found the island's coral reefs as diverse as those in Australia's Great Barrier Reef. For instance, studies done on only two kilometers of coral reef in waters around the island have yielded 190 species and 73 genera of corals. Compare that with 80 genera of corals found in the Great Barrier Reef's 1,600 kilometers. Marine conservationist experts believe that many more species of coral in this sanctuary have yet to be identified.

Over the years, much of the marine sources in the area have been impaired by typhoons, big fish trawlers, and dynamite and cyanide fishing.

Uplands erosion as a result of strong typhoons has caused siltation in the waters, ravaging coral reefs around Danjugan. Typhoon Beach, for instance, is so-called because what used to be fringing reefs fronting the area have been battered and crushed into what is now a combination of pinkish ruble and white sand.

In the mid-1990s, alarmed by the rate of degradation happening in Danjugan's waters, Ledesma, who turned into an environmental warrior (at one time, he was head of Negros Forests and Ecological Foundation Inc.) sounded out an alarm.

Also at that point, Danjugan's original owners wanted to sell the island, posing a real danger that it would be transformed into a commercial resort. Ledesma was desperate for a way to protect the island, short of buying it himself—if he had the resources.

"Then as now, there is no grant window in the country that entertains land purchase," said Ledesma. Fortunately, a friend working with Fauna & Flora International directed him to World Land Trust (WLT), a UK-based conservation charity that purchases and protects threatened habitats around the globe.

WLT collaborated in the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Project, the first major activity of the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PRRCFI) put up in 1994 by Ledesma and other trustees that included Junie and the late Nicholas Lizares, cousins from his mother's side of the family.

Trickles

"Still," Ledesma recounted, "project funds came in trickles. We approached the Land Bank (of the Philippines) for a bridge loan, and it issued us one—its first-ever environmental loan." The loan had a term of five years but was paid up in three, thanks to the hugely successful international response to efforts of the CCC, PRRCFI and WLT, which created a funding scheme of Green Shares valued at 25 pounds sterling (or $40) per share for repayment of the loan.

Transactions to purchase Danjugan from its original owners, the Chua Montes family, were completed in 1994. The following year, the first batch of CCC volunteers arrived. In a span of at least five years, some 1,500 volunteers were sent by CCC, a non-profit organization that trains and sends out expeditions to survey the most endangered coral reefs and tropical reefs around the world.

CCC is financed mainly by volunteers who pay to participate in the expeditions that run from two to over 12 weeks.

The sheer number of CCC volunteers who went to Danjugan made the island and the surrounding coral reefs the most intensely surveyed in the country to date. Comprehensive and high level scientific work done by the volunteers and CCC's scientific advisers produced exemplary results. In February 2000, the provincial government of Negros Occidental declared the surrounding fringing reefs around the island as the Danjugan Island Marine Reserve and Sanctuaries (DIMRS)—the first of its kind in the province and the first marine protected area in the country so transformed as a result of private sector initiatives.

Earlier, an announcement expecting Danjugan to be declared the world's newest marine reserve was made by the Royal Geographical Society during a special reception in London that marked 1997 as the International Year of the Reef.

Further recognition of Ledesma's persevering work in Danjugan and the CCC's volunteers' own invaluable contributions was achieved when the DIMRS was accorded in 2001 the Best Managed Reef Award by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research and Development and the State University's PhilReefs.

Praises were heaped on PRRCFI and CCC for their "exemplary collaborative conservation efforts in protecting the exceptionally rich coral reef surrounding Danjugan Island..."

How to sustain

Beyond the accolades however, the struggle to sustain past efforts continues. The CCC volunteers have long left. Grant money from the UK—enabling PRRCFI to develop the DIMRS and organize its management board, form Bantay Dagat (Sea Watch) councils to patrol waters within the marine sanctuary, launch alternative and complementary livelihood projects—are drying up.

The foundation's complement of marine biologists and community workers have been reduced to two—Rhoda Avanzado and Vincent Lumbab. Avanzado left a banking career to work as education officer in charge of training trainors for the ongoing Marine and Wildlife Camps and the coastal resource management training program for LGUs. Lumbab is a marine science coordinator whose tasks include monitoring aquatic life in Danjugan and coordinating with other LGUs in establishing their own marine protected areas.

There are obstacles, yes, but Ledesma is intent on a new phase for PRRCFI: self-reliance. He is encouraging the LGU with direct jurisdiction over Danjugan to make good its commitment to contribute a portion of its revenues for the DIMRS. "It's about time the LGU gave its share," he said.

WLT has posted a notice in its website for donations to a support fund for Danjugan. Under the limited tourism project, scuba diving will be allowed in Danjugan's clear waters, affording enthusiasts to see the spectacular coral reefs. Minimal fees will be collected from entrants to Danjugan's protected waters—P750 per dive. Really a miniscule amount for the privilege of viewing the underwater treasure in one of the most marvelous, Nature-favored places in the country, nay, the region!

For additional information, contact Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation Inc. at tel. no. (6334)441-1658 or email prrcfi@mozcom.com

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Angelic heirs

By Felipe M. de Leon, Jr.
Contributor

The Loboc Children's Choir is a testimony to the ancient heritage of devotion to God through music

BOHOL is like precious jade among Philippine provinces. Boholanos can be truly proud of its long list of natural wonders, as well as its traditions and historical achievements. Their greatest feat is preserving and nurturing an attitude towards life that is rooted in ancient communal and mythical culture.

Among the most brilliant manifestations of this success are the stunning musical feats of the Loboc Children's Choir. In 1980, the very year it was formed, the choir won third place in the most challenging arena for children's choirs in the country, the National Music Competition for Young Artists. It pressed ahead to win first place in the same competition in 1993, 1995 and 2001.

The choir has scored other successes: In 1996, via a concert dubbed, "On Angels' Wings: From Bohol to the World," the LCC toured key cities in the United States. In 1999, it performed with the World Youth Orchestra during its concerts in Bohol and Cebu. The following year, it represented the Philippines in the International Children's Culture and Arts Festival in Tianjin, China, and held concerts in Beijing and Hong Kong.

Their secret

Most impressive is the choir's unqualified triumph in Europe last September 20, 2003. At the majestic church of Santa Maria del Pi in Barrio Gottico, Barcelona, Spain, 13 choirs from around the world competed in the 6th International Folksong Choir Festival. The festival was organized by the Associazione Internazionale Amici della Musica Sacra. Bohol's pride won the grand prize in the Children's Choir Category. As if this were not enough, it was awarded the "Europe and Its Songs 2003 Cup" for earning the highest score of 97.5 points in the entire competition.

Among the songs in the choir's contest repertoire were: James Swu's "Ampeu Se-lo", San Pedro's "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan", "Leron Leron Sinta," Gustav Holst's "Ave Maria" and "La Pastoreta", a Catalan folksong. The LCC's assisting pianist was Baby Lina Jala, its musical director was Alma Fernando-Taldo.

The Loboc Children's Choir is composed of 26 kids, ages 10 to 13, from the Loboc Central Elementary School. Many of the members come from families of farmers, fishermen, vendors and artisans. Their voices have been described as "angelic" and their singing as "spontaneous" and "pure in spirit." What is their secret?

Loboc is regarded by many cultural historians as Bohol's leading heritage town. Its beautifully preserved church, established in 1602, is the second oldest in the province. Loboc River, where several floating restaurants ferry visitors to its awesome source, is one of the longest in the country.

During the Spanish period, the church was one of the earliest recipients of systematic instruction in liturgical music imparted by the Spanish missionaries throughout the Christianized towns in the archipelago. According to musicologist Dr. Elena Mirano-Rivera, this could have given birth to generations of excellent male and female singers trained in plainchant and the vocal techniques of western harmonic practice.

Gentle nurturing

The religious hierarchy underscored the importance of the musical training of Christian Filipinos for conversion of the soul, music being the most soulful of the arts. Many prominent singers, instrumentalists and composers in the 18th and 19th centuries—luminaries like Marcelo Adonay, Simplicio Solis, Jose Canseco, Andres Ciria Cruz, and Natalio and Manuel Mata—started as tiples or choir boys.

Through the ages, the pervasive influence of this musical tradition has reared a community of singers, musicians, composers, and music teachers in Loboc. Brass bands, rondallas, adult choirs and a brass symphonic ensemble also thrive on the island.

This musicality is further nurtured with strong support from within the community as well as from outside friends and patrons. A local foundation teaches the children solfeggio and the rudiments of music for free. In the Loboc convent complex will soon be established Tuburan, the Center for Living Traditions.

Cultural institutions outside Loboc have given much encouragement to the flowering of Boholano culture. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila recently launched an exhibit on the culture of the province and prominently featured the Loboc Children's Choir.

Much of the choir's technical skills—full-bodied blending and resonance, rhythmic flow, tightly knit harmonies, varied textures and expressiveness—have been honed through the selfless dedication of its musical director and conductor, Alma Fernando-Taldo, a fifth grade teacher of English and Character Education in Loboc Central Elementary School. Her first musical training consisted of lessons given by her paternal grandfather and the tradition of free solfeggio lessons. She advanced her training by attending workshops conducted by renowned Filipino musicians like National Artist for Music Prof. Andrea Veneracion, Ed L. Manguiat of the U.P. Singing Ambassadors, and composers Dr. Ramon Santos, Prof. Chino Toledo and Dr. Francisco Feliciano.

Yet the technical training that the choir receives explains only the more obvious basis of their artistic prowess. Their musical gifts seem to have deeper and older roots in a tradition that Filipinos all throughout the country's rural villages share: the ancient heritage of faith and devotion to God through music.

Devotional fervor

This has been our spiritual heritage long before the coming of the Spaniards. Three major international surveys in 1979, 1991 and 1995-96 affirmed Filipino religiosity to be the highest in the world, especially in the rural areas where the fiesta tradition, *pasyon, senakulo, santakrusan,* and *simbang gabi* remain very much alive, if alongside animistic practices.

Before Christianity came to our shores, the objects of worship were ancestral heroes and nature spirits. Catholicism later replaced these with patron saints. But the people—well, except for the most jaded urbanites now—have retained the devotional fervor and almost childlike faith in the spirit world.

This inner quality engenders an open, trusting, sensitive and harmonious disposition towards life, particularly among rural children. It encourages reaching out to others, warm enthusiasm, and empathy. It begets a contagious optimism and joy of life. These, indeed, find a most fitting expression in music.

The LCC members have an abundance of these qualities, the primal sources of their triumphs. These are the wellsprings of their magical, angelic voices and the purity of their tone, spontaneity, vigor and charm. Of course these are profoundly Filipino qualities that even adults possess to a certain degree.

The mission of the choir is to inspire children all over the world, but especially other Filipino children, to realize these innate musical potentials! With adequate support, technical training, commitment and perseverance, every province tapping its indigenous cultural strengths can produce its own world-class children's choir.

The Loboc Children Choir will be performing in the National Heritage Month festivities in Bohol. For details, email gardushka@yahoo.com, lobocchildrenschoir@yahoo.com, or dftaldo@yahoo.com

THE CHOIR'S inner strength comes from its tradition and community spirit.

Yielding to the allure of wood

Haspé Furnishings illustrates how a discovered passion can turn one's life around

By Meluchi A. Rivera
Contributor

'KULOT.' *Molave* chair and coffee table inlaid with squiggles of *molave*

ANYONE for an Araw (sun) table? Or a Tilapia (pearl fish) bench? How about a Kulot (curly-haired) side table and chair?

These and other quirkily-named items are offered at Haspé Furnishings, the product of Avie Gochoco-Perez's love affair with old wood and all its possibilities. Perez, a former career journalist, is putting a new "spin" on traditional Filipino furniture. The showroom at Legaspi Towers, Makati is furnished much like a home would be, illustrating Perez's flair for creating graceful, functional pieces in *narra, molave, balayong (tindalo)* and *kamagong*. That the materials once formed part of old homes and served other functions only seems to endow her items with more wit, character and vitality.

Haspé is also testament to how a discovered passion can drive one's life into unplanned directions. It all began in the year 2000, when Perez set out to renovate what was to be their new home in Alabang. Determined to have a house that was Filipino in every detail, she bought wood by the truck-full from several *mambubulok*, small operators who demolish old provincial homes and sell the usable parts to antique dealers.

"After the house was finished, there was still a lot of wood left," she recounts. "So I decided to make our dining set. And then, I worked on our bed."

By this time Perez was hooked, and it took very little prompting from her husband Resty to turn her obsession into a business. These days, though her workshop is "overrun with wood," she still avidly scours junk shops for materials she can use. "I see something—old grilles, baffles, windows and gates—and I know how to use it," she says. It is remarkable for someone who learned the design and technical aspects of furniture-making just from poring over books and from hours spent in the workshop with, initially, just one carpenter and one varnisher.

Minimal embellishment

The pieces she has turned out are very well-crafted and, surprisingly, reasonably priced. "Since the showroom is new, I want people to come here, see what we can do, and if they like it, be able to buy things off the floor," Perez explains. She keeps costs down by "not paying myself anything, and passing those savings to customers," she adds, laughing.

Haspé's Filipino pieces have a contemporary feel, on account of her preference for minimal embellishment and working the materials as little as possible. "The less work done on the wood, the better," she explains, as wood is already innately graceful, with its fine natural grains—or haspé—often more alluring than ornate man-rendered carvings.

Among Perez's first and favorite designs is the Tilapia bench, which she describes as "both utilitarian and artistic." It has a molave post for a seat, with horseshoe-shaped legs that extend upward to serve as supports for the fish-shaped armrests. Depending on its placement in a room, it can also serve as a low table, a divider or an accent piece.

"I like to have the materials retain shades of their previous life," Perez says. The Hagdang-Isda (fish stairs) six-seater bench is so named because the backrest served as the *madre* (support) of a staircase in an old home. Laid horizontally and then fused back-to-back, the patterns appear to form fish, lined up as a child's paper cutout.

Haspé's other staples include the Toto *aparador* or armoire, which uses capiz from old windows; and Gareta side tables topped with round, solid pieces of wood, that turn out to have been wheels of the *gareta*, the carabao-driven cart of old. These were humble farmers' implements but were invariably made of *narra* or *molave*, which just indicates how bountiful Philippine hardwood was in the old days.

Popular piece

The Araw table is a bigger, glass-topped affair that sports wrought iron details and uses a spoked cartwheel (the allusion is to the sun and its rays) and part of a massive wooden post. "This is so popular, and it was almost completely my wood workers' design. He even welded the iron parts himself!" Perez says proudly. "You think they're just carpenters, but they know quite a bit, having worked with the material for a long time."

These days, Perez can also count on nephew JayR Ortiz, a Fine Arts graduate from the University of the Philippines, for input. Among his designs is the Sagingan line of mirrors and benches that sport the banana-leaf design. Ortiz is usually on hand to assist buyers at the showroom, while Perez admits to spending most days at the workshop.

"I love watching (the workers) make stuff. I even get ideas on what to do with the scrap," she says. Indeed, in this business of making new things from bits of old homes, nothing goes to waste. Small wood pieces are worked into candelabras, lamps and frames.

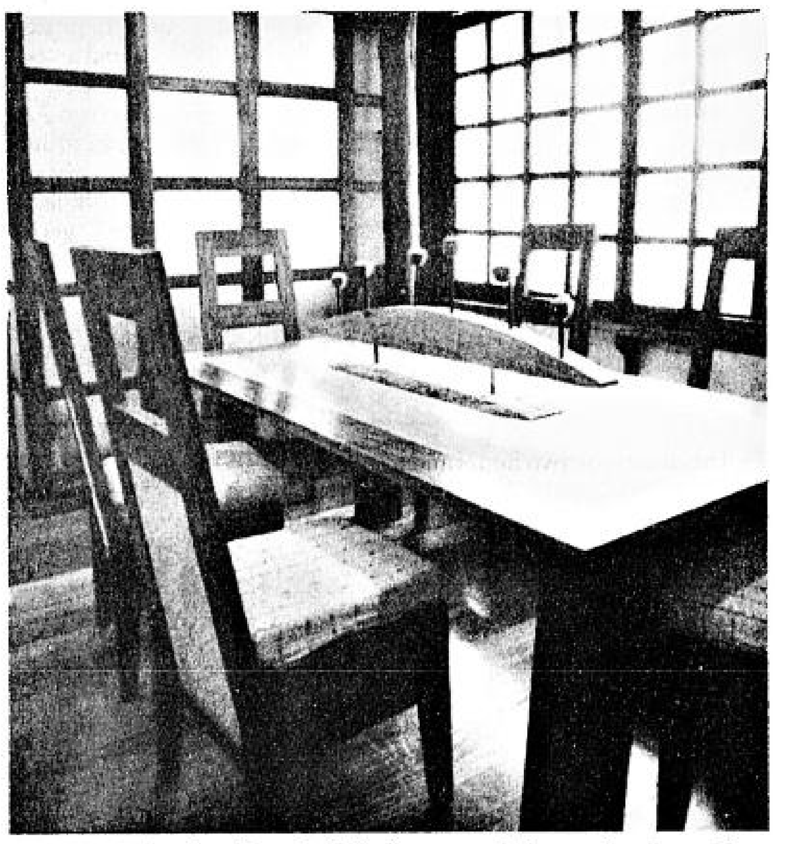
Haspé's line encompasses nearly everything a homeowner needs to furnish a space. Perez is often requested to visit clients' homes and give suggestions, and she is only too happy to oblige. "Nowadays, when I go into a house, I want to fix it up. I can see where my pieces can be positioned. And when I deliver (the items), I even rearrange the small décor items," she says, laughing. "I have to literally be dragged out because at times, I even want to repaint the walls!"

It's an occupational hazard for this businesswoman who's not in it just for the money. "I really love what I'm doing," Perez explains. "I should have gotten into this a long time ago."

Call Haspe Furnishings at 812-4245.

Photos by Chito Vecina
Pictorial direction by
Albert Avellana

THE DOORS and flooring come from old houses. With buffing, antique wood shines and doesn't warp. The store features a floor lamp made from ancient window and iron legs.



PULANG Bahag (red G-string) dining set made from *alamsiga* and *balayang*. The lines of the chair are inspired by the tribal G-string. Accenting the table is an arched *molave* candleholder. The store windows come from an old house in Cagayan Valley.

Delectable deviation

At Esda Shangri-La's Paparazzi, this means a new presentation, not a departure from the favored flavors of Italy

HOME-MADE ravioli with seabass and scallops drenched in shrimp sauce and cherry tomatoes

HERS has become a familiar name to many. Over the past 12 years, she has welcomed businessmen, ladies who lunch, families and groups of friends who come for her authentic Italian offerings. She has delighted discriminating palates time and again, thus earning the loyalty—one can almost say the friendship—of many patrons.

"She" is Paparazzi, Edsa Shangri-La's Italian restaurant, which has reaped praise and success since it opened in 1992. Nonetheless, the Shangri-La management has deemed it fit to give this gracious hostess a facelift, a makeover if you will, to give her a more spirited, contemporary look.

The chief architect of this makeover is Wong Chiu Man, managing director of Warner Wong Design and Architecture of Singapore. As he explains it, the references to classic Mediterranean architecture have been replaced with elements that borrow from Italy's rich tradition of design, theatre and, yes, couture. Even the haughtiest *fashionista* would approve.

Right at the door

The transformation is perceptible right at the entrance. The new Paparazzi welcomes diners with a backlit screen of woven wood strips, which evokes the classic woven leather handbag designs of Bottega Veneta. More wooden design elements are carried through to the ceilings and dividers, which are the perfect backdrop to the splashes of bronze, orange and green from the bar, the unique buffet table and, adding the most drama, the row of spice and vegetable jars encased in glass tubes on one side.

"We've taken elements of the cuisine and made them a backdrop, like museum pieces," Wong explains. This makes for a space where both the food and the people are on display.

The buffet table is not pushed back to one side of the room; rather, it dominates the main dining area. The table itself is remarkable, not only for its size (which is small by hotel standards) but for its undulating shape which, Wong reveals, was inspired by a Prada shoe. At night, the table is turned into additional seating (it is the best spot in the house), accommodating groups of up to 11. Details such as the Murano light fixtures (reportedly handpicked by the Italian CEO of the Shangri-la group, Giovanni Angiolini), glassware, linen and floral arrangements, are all designed to evoke the stylish spirit of Italy.

While patrons will no doubt revel in this urbane ambience, the best news for the dining public is that Paparazzi's updated looks are mere foil for a soul that is essentially unchanged. The menu remains true to her traditional Italian roots; the savory, hearty, bucolic fare that many have come to know and love. The "modern" twist comes with the use technology to keep ingredients as prime and fresh as possible.

Nothing accidental

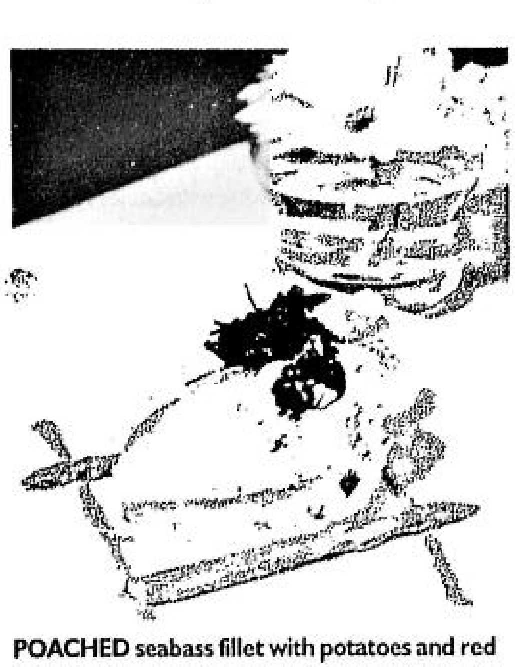
The idea was to update Paparazzi's menu, not by deviating from the flavors of Italy but by presenting it in the most interesting fashion. The smallish buffet table is no accident, as management's thrust is to present a diverse selection of Italian appetizers, entrees and desserts in small doses. Thus, the selections never sit out on the table for too long, and are constantly replenished, fresh out of the kitchen.

Visit Paparazzi for lunch and one will be rewarded with a spread of antipasto, risotto, and a sampling of her signature dishes such as poached seabass fillet in a red bell pepper cream sauce, and braised veal shank with porcini mushrooms. Cuts of roasted lamb chops and grilled rib eye steak are ready for the hearty eater. Pasta fans can have any of their favorites cooked upon order (try the ravioli with seabass and scallops in a shrimp-based sauce, or the linguine with a redolent Alfredo sauce). To cap the meal, there is the selection of sweets, including tiramisu and panna cotta.

Diners can also treat themselves to zabaliogne (both the sweet and savory kinds) which will be made right before their eyes at the open zabaglione counter. If they are lucky, Paparazzi's chef Giancarlo will make the treats himself. Ordering a zabaliogne is well worth it, if only to catch Giancarlo's amusing commentary about how these concoctions—made primarily of egg yolk and sugar, then flavored with wine, berries or a myriad ingredients—can come together only if they are "whipped with lots of patience, love, and passion!"

That much can be said of Paparazzi's rebirth. The makeover, borne of two years of planning and another feverish two months of construction, works in its efforts to bring together the authentic and the innovative. Diners can only savor the results.

Meluchi Rivera



POACHED seabass fillet with potatoes and red bell pepper cream sauce and asparagus sidings

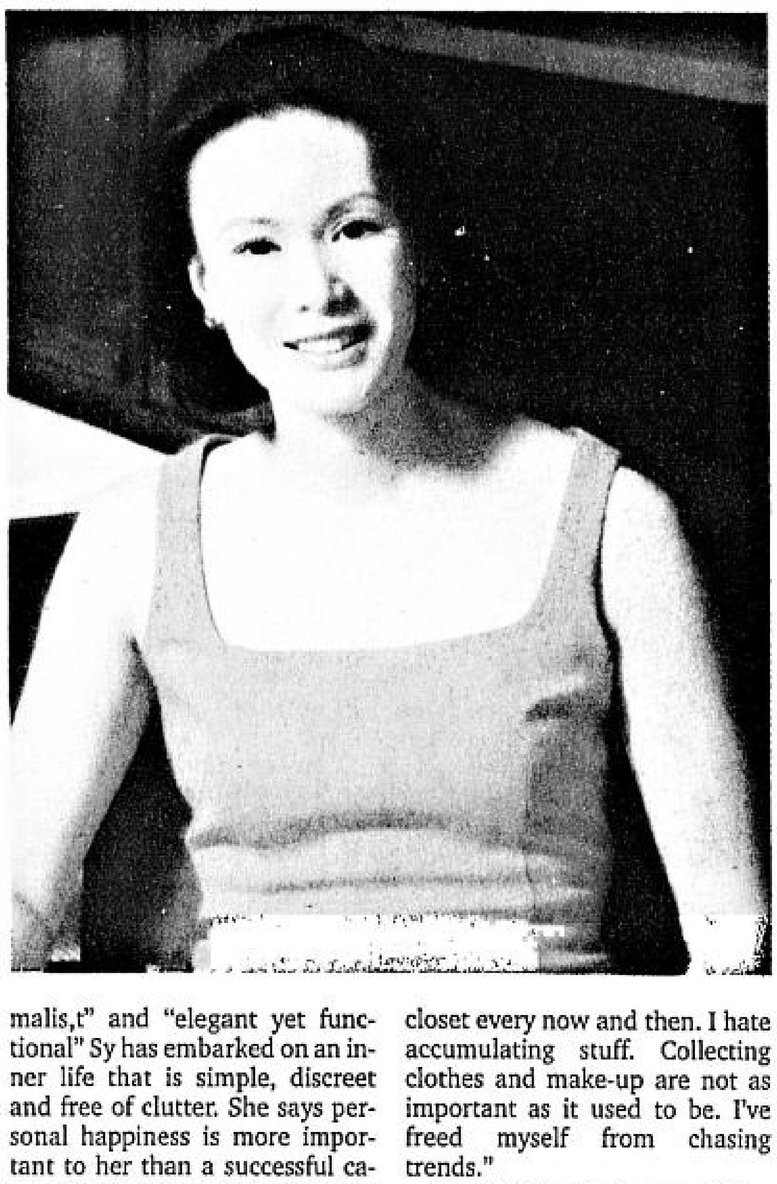
CIRCULAR bar with dropped ceiling is the focus.

PHOTOS BY JAY JAVIER

Her serene grace

By Angela Blardony Ureta
Contributor

In her utter simplicity, architect Anna Maria Sy could breeze through a busy corridor unnoticed. But the fact is, she leaves a powerful impression



SHE looks deceivingly fragile, like a delicate Oriental princess wrapped in exquisite silk. She speaks in soft, almost hushed tones, carefully selected words delivered with forethought. When she laughs, she sparkles, although her amusement remains slightly veiled by diffidence. Like archetypal women born under the Libra sun, architect Anna Maria Sy is the quintessence of beauty, harmony and balance ... living proof that genteel grace can still be found in the cacophony of cosmopolitan life.

In her utter simplicity, Sy could breeze through a busy corridor unnoticed, but the fact is, she leaves a powerful impression on those she gets acquainted with. There is no mistaking the sharpness and wit of her conversation, and the gaze that captures minute details of every fresh personal encounter, be it discussing design ideas with a new client or giving an interview.

This is why when she describes her typical working day as "frantic," it is rather hard to believe. But she swears it could be quite frenzied, indeed, shuttling between the design table and the construction site while juggling several projects in various stages of execution. As principal designer of Chai Sy Architecture Inc, she has spent the last 10 years building an impressive portfolio of residential and corporate structures, as well as doing interiors for select establishments. Her partner, former schoolmate and longtime friend Jason Chai, mans the US-based main office, while she takes care of business for the Asian region from Manila.

Big decision

Originally, the plan was for her to establish an office here, then find someone to supervise it so she could fly back to Connecticut. But things turned out differently and, despite the growing discontent in the country's economic and political conditions, Sy decided to stay.

"We've been very lucky," she says. "Since we've been here, we've had such a wonderful list of clients for residences. It's rare to find a body of available work (like ours). Some have come back for us to design their second homes."

At the rate CSA's portfolio is expanding, it's clear the lady knows whereof she speaks. And despite the "long-distance relationship," Sy maintains, she and her partner collaborate closely on projects via fax, e-mail and telephone exchanges. "I go to the States four times a year, three weeks at a time, so we can bounce ideas off each other. That's when I bring new projects to work on."

Darling dominatrix

Despite her calm demeanor, Sy claims she could be a dominatrix at the workplace. "I tend to be a control freak," she confesses. "It's also because people here are not used to throwing ideas around that I practically have to pry suggestions out of them. I think the young people at work get so bogged down by the practical side of design and architecture that they forget we have to start with concepts. They're still not used to thinking about an idea first and developing that, then work on the practicality of it later."

Sy reveals that it was the challenge of turning models into structures that got her hooked on architecture. "When I took up design studio, that's when everything opened up! You create a concept, then work it out dimensionally into a built form. It was like completing a puzzle!"

After completing her art history course at Columbia University, she pushed on for a masters degree in Architecture from Harvard University, where she graduated in 1989. It was a curious choice of profession for the only daughter of banker Ramon Sy, whose family is an institution in Philippine banking and finance.

"I knew nothing about numbers," she says in mock revulsion. "I barely passed my math (subjects), even in architecture. I just squeaked by structural engineering, mechanical engineering—those were horrible!"

Independent minds

While most Filipino-Chinese families tend to hold on to tradition, especially in running the family enterprise, Sy reveals that she and her brothers were trained by their parents to think for themselves.

"Our family is as westernized as Filipino-Chinese families go. None of us even speak Chinese, although my father could probably get by ordering in a Chinese restaurant," she quips. "We were brought up with a very western attitude towards choosing whom we would end up with, and what career we would pursue. But they can be traditional in the Filipino way: they can be quite protective, and they like to know about everything you're doing!"

Although she has spent a huge portion of her growing up years overseas—living in Hong Kong and Japan as a child, then moving on to the United States—Sy explains that her design principles are based mostly on local culture. "It's important for us that what we create feels rooted to the place. There is a lot of consideration for local design and the way people use space. The finished product should look like it belongs here—that it's Asian, that it's Filipino."

The secret to maintaining professional satisfaction, she says, is to know how far you can adapt to changes without compromising too much. "When we were starting out, we accepted projects for practical reasons, and because we needed the exposure. Now, the focus is different. We have to produce work we can be proud of. If I can't find interesting projects here, I will be somewhere else. At this point in my life, it has to be gratifying—and it should pay the bills. I'm not working for free anymore!" she laughs.

Inner life

Just like her designs, which have been described as "minimalis,t" and "elegant yet functional" Sy has embarked on an inner life that is simple, discreet and free of clutter. She says personal happiness is more important to her than a successful career, though she admits she didn't think this way before.

"When I first moved back to Manila, I worked seven days a week and my parents were always complaining. Now, you have to pull me by the neck to get me to the office on a weekend! As you grow older, you learn that your personal time is equally important."

She also stresses the importance of keeping her material life uncomplicated. "I don't own a lot of things. I enjoy shopping like most women, but I clean out my closet every now and then. I hate accumulating stuff. Collecting clothes and make-up are not as important as it used to be. I've freed myself from chasing trends."

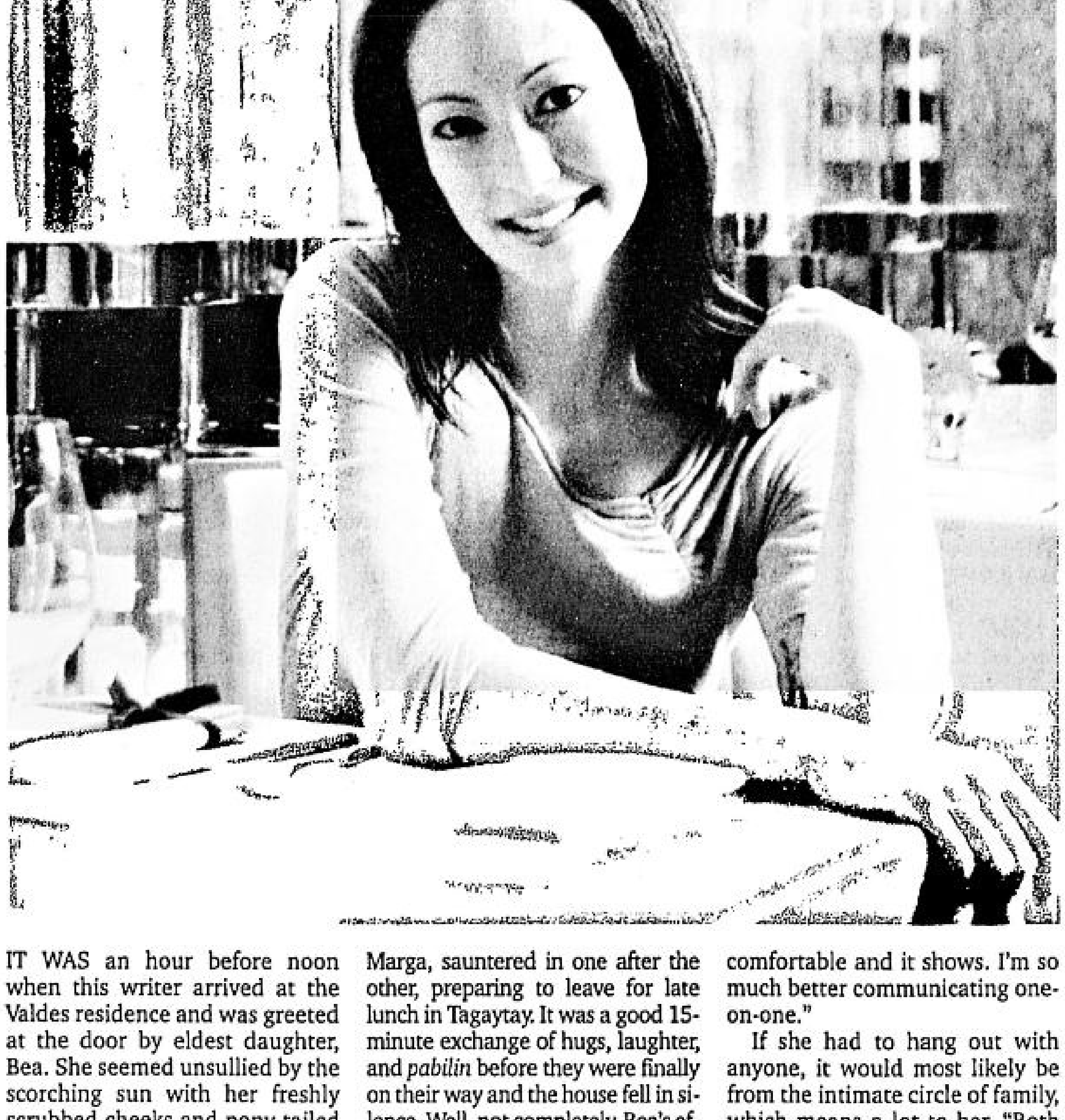
Youthful at 40, she uses Elizabeth Arden's "Overnight Success" which she says pleasantly moisturizes and relaxes her skin. It augurs well with her because she is allergic to a lot of beauty products.

In reality, cutting down on excess baggage and holding on to a basic foundation for living and loving is what accounts for Anna's radiance.

Her personal blueprint for joy and contentment is really simple: "If you're happy inside, it shows."

The incredible lightness of Bea

She makes one-of-a kind handbags and clutches that are veritable jewels of design, precious like herself



IT WAS an hour before noon when this writer arrived at the Valdes residence and was greeted at the door by eldest daughter, Bea. She seemed unsullied by the scorching sun with her freshly scrubbed cheeks and pony-tailed hair. At her heels was an enormous and amiable Labrador, who dribbled and puffed in the sweltering summer heat. We entered the spacious yet cozy living room and settled in a nook where we could chat over coffee and strawberry shortcake.

Bea's parents and youngest sister Marga, sauntered in one after the other, preparing to leave for late lunch in Tagaytay. It was a good 15-minute exchange of hugs, laughter, and *pabilin* before they were finally on their way and the house fell in silence. Well, not completely. Bea's effusiveness broke the stillness intermittently—hardly a trace of the reclusive homebody she earlier described herself to be.

"But I really am a bit anti-social," she protested. "I hardly go out. I don't mind too much if I know all the other people in a gathering; otherwise, I get uncomfortable and it shows. I'm so much better communicating one-on-one."

If she had to hang out with anyone, it would most likely be from the intimate circle of family, which means a lot to her. "Both my parents come from big clans. Growing up, we were surrounded by cousins and other relatives. We didn't exactly need friends from outside," she explained. Also, all Valdes siblings were into sports—brother Martin competed in golf, Bea and sisters Marga and Pilar were in the national gymnastics team. "We practiced everyday after class, as well as Saturdays. That's four hours a day, six days a week throughout our school years—that's why we never really learned to socialize!"

Recently, however, the entire family has gotten hooked on Pilates, and the whole brood is planning to fly to New York to be certified! "It's fun," she said, "although we have to wait until my dad can do the exercises with his eyes open!"

No spoiled brat

This closeness further blossomed, Bea recounted, as the siblings grew into adulthood, when the household rules started to relax. "We weren't spoiled at all. Even when we got good grades, we didn't get new toys, for example, because our parents believed it was our duty to study—why should they reward us? That's why I get pretty shocked with kids today who get everything they want and take it for granted."

The Valdes siblings became achievers in their own fields of interest. "Our mom was very good at pushing us and making sure we did things well," Bea said. They were also encouraged to forge their own career paths. "We ended up in very diverse fields: I'm into design, my brother is into film and writing, one sister took up gender studies and economics, the other is in communications. Our parents allowed us to pursue whatever interested us, no matter how strange, without pressure to engage in more 'legitimate' professions. Which is probably why we're all still living at home!" she laughed.

Bea took up Creative Writing at the University of the Philippines before shifting to Industrial design. After two years, she moved to England. Her growing interest in furniture design prompted her to pursue a masters' certificate from the Inchbald School of Design in London, which she described as "a small school with a pretty impressive list of alumni."

Just before she graduated, the school submitted her CV to a design studio and she got hired. Fresh out of college, Bea found herself earning a decent wage as junior designer in the fabrics and furniture department of a company that specialized in building and decorating resorts and hotels in the world's exotic vacation capitals.

"The job exposed me to both interior design and architecture," she recounted. "At 21, I was helping draw up lobbies for big hotels like the Grand Hyatt. I'm sure the client had no idea it was in my hands!"

Beautiful bags

She stayed in London for two and a half years, building a remarkable portfolio and enjoying the creativity stimulated by merely being in an art-soaked environment. "One visit to the Tate Museum and it was like an epiphany! Those were some of the most enriching years of my life."

Returning to Manila, Bea was drawn more and more to working with objects rather than space. Soon, her furniture and accessories were finding their way into the stylish set's favored collectibles—particularly, her highly exclusive line of chic, vibrant, and very pricey, bags.

Fully beaded and delicately handcrafted, her one-of-a kind handbags and clutches are veritable jewels of design and workmanship, and are thus justifiably priced. "Let's just say I can't afford my own bags" she quipped. "Actually, it's not only the material that's expensive but also the labor cost. I have four *manangs* working full-time and they can finish only one bag each per month."

She has been experimenting with new materials like plastic, leatherette and buttons, if only to step up production to about 10 bags monthly. Not exactly a bustling production line, but quite enough for someone who would rather not repeat herself, design-wise. Right now, the inspiration of choice is fish—playful koi and goldfish swimming their way gracefully through a sea of beads.

A writer, too

When she is not busy sketching, she writes. "Of all the things I do, writing is the most frustrating. I need to have absolute quiet. My editor would usually give me a topic and some direction, but I almost always veer away from it eventually."

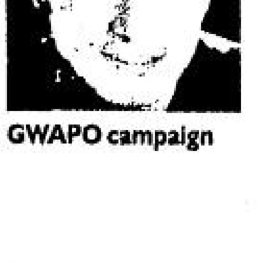
She admitted to being obsessed with research and thinks nothing of wading through research material to prepare for a short feature. "I like going through the whole history of my subject," said Bea. "I like writing about people, especially older folks, because you learn so much from them." She counts her encounter with artist Juvenal Sanso as her most memorable assignment so far.

A commercial model in her teens, her daily beauty must-haves boil down to sunblock and concealer "for my genetic eyebags." At 30, she uses Elizabeth Arden's Overnight Success Skin Renewal Serum before bedtime for lightening up the tiny laugh lines that have started surfacing on her otherwise unblemished complexion. "It also keeps my skin from looking tired, so I've been using it even in the morning," she averred.

More than anything, though, it is certainly her inner radiance that makes Bea delightful to behold. And it makes for an incredible lightness of being. *Angela Blardony Ureta*

Anna's and Bea's photos
by Jay Javier
Makeup by Ricardo Carlos Jr.
for Elizabeth Arden
Location: Paparrazi,
Edsa Shangri-la Hotel
Special thanks: Milen Treichler

Two sides of hair styling



GWAPO campaign

HAIR Reborn

THE HAIRDRESSER has to work double time. He's got the tough side job of playing psychologist to his client.

"Ninety-nine point five per cent of customers who visit the salon need to boost their morale," says hairdresser and TV host Ricky Reyes.

A cut and styling can perk up a depressed person, and a single compliment after the makeover works like a shot in the arm for him or her.

With the success of his "Gandang Ricky" campaign, Reyes has embarked on the new "Guwapo" campaign with celebrities led by Albert Martinez (extreme left) a cool guy over 35. Reyes gave him a conservative cut with clean sides, a voluminous crown and mahogany coloring.

For the summer, the salon offers several services and treatments. First, customers are given a free hair analysis by having their hair scanned with an ultrasound machine. It accurately diagnoses the state of the hair and scalp to detect conditions that cannot be detected by the naked eye.

To revive lifeless hair, Hair Reborn uses protein-based ingredients that are applied and ironed onto the hair. The heat enables the vitamins and minerals to penetrate the cortex of the hair to make it healthier.

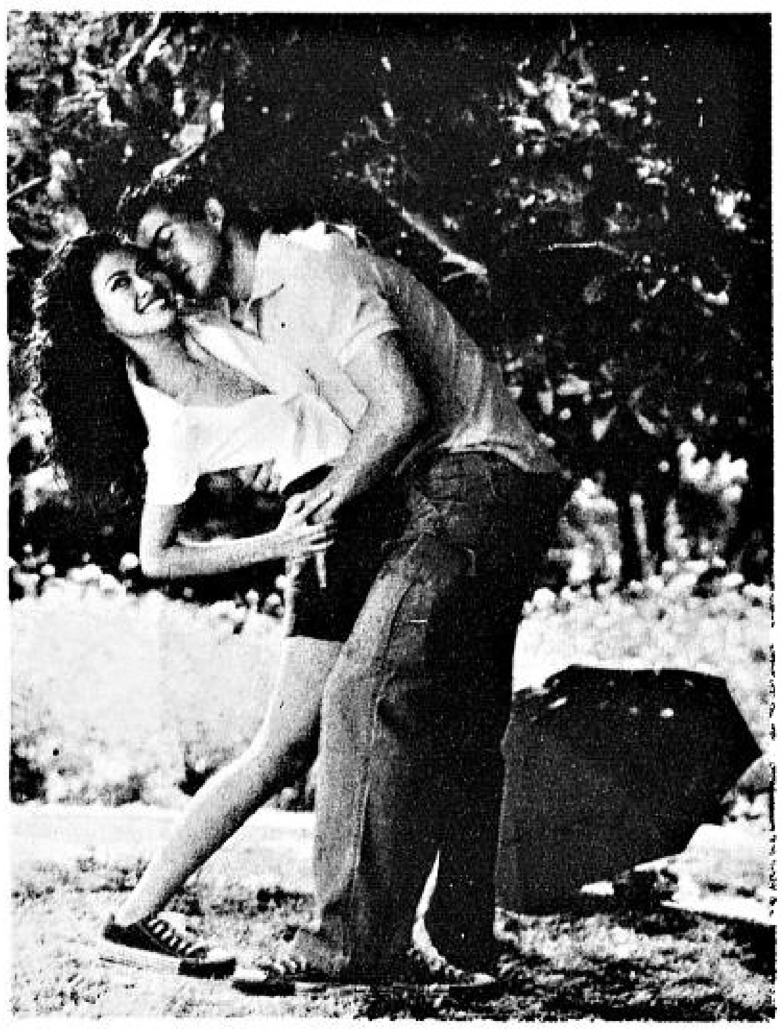
Reyes says if the customer looks and feels good afterwards, he or she is bound to do good, too.

Delight in everything you have

ON MATT: Celio printed long-sleeved polo shirt; Celio twill pants. On Anja: HerBench woven shirt; HerBench khaki shorts with ribboned waistband detail

Give the gift of attention

ON JENIE: HerBench bra; sabrina-cut white cotton shirt; red slim belt; denim mini skirt. On Matt: Celio white embroidered long-sleeved shirt; dark denim pants



Aspire and never let go

ON JON: Celio gray t-shirt with collar; camouflage slim-cut cargo pants; red umbrella. On Anja: HerBench yellow embroidered blouse; denim miniskirt

Dreams are the seeds from which beautiful tomorrows grow

Photos by Wig Tysmans

Become the moment before it passes you by

ON JENIE: HerBench Overhauled denim bra; white cotton linen long-sleeved blouse; HerBench surf shorts. On Anja: striped pullover with snap-button detail; Bench shades; HerBench Overhauled denim bikini. On Jon: Celio blue polo; brown walking shorts

CLOTHES: Celio, Herbench
STYLIST: Noel Manapat
HAIR AND MAKEUP: Krist Bansuelo
MODELS: Anja Chua, Jenie Manuel, Matt Hadfield, Jon Mullaly
COSMETICS: Prestige, Beauty Bar
LOCATION: Bohol Bee Farm, Sagbayan Peak (email: info@sagbayanpeak.com.ph

Special thanks to Baby Balio and Judy Quiachon of Bohol Tourism Office. Tel. No. (038) 501-9816

Asian Spirt flies to Tagbilaran City daily. Tel. no. 851-8888

All rubber shoes from Bench and Herbench

How Fashion Week evolved

PHILIPPINE Fashion Week has become a vehicle for local and global brands and for designers and the industry's other artists—models, hairdressers, stylists, photographers—to showcase their talents.

This 10-day celebration at Glorietta Activity Center, Hotel Inter-Continental and NBC Tent also acts as a mediator between local industry groups—sponsors from the garment and beauty industries, retailers and designers. It also coordinates a system that facilitates a balance between artistry and commercialism while encouraging a sense of community among those who are involved each year.

Since its inception, Philippine Fashion Week has developed an identity beyond a mall show. Designer shows are held off the site. It has helped make both the local industry, foreign brands and individual designers more visible and accessible.

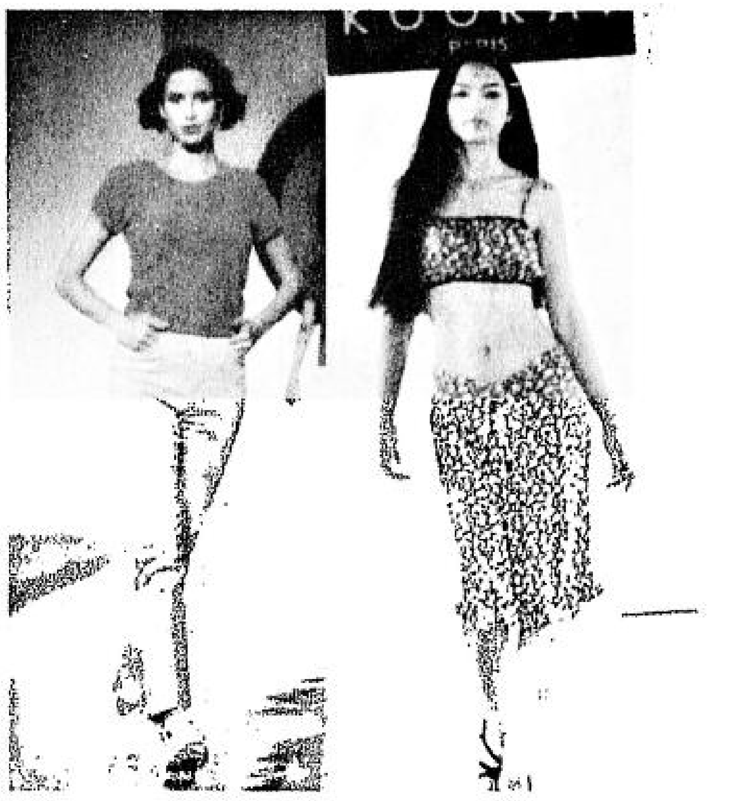
Metro Manila is an important consumer center because of its population of 13 million, with an elite and middle-class groups that keep abreast of international trends.

1997

AS ASIAN tiger economies roared, Western brands infiltrated the region. The foreign brands, because of their novelty, captured the imagination of Filipino consumers. Foreign models were imported to project the global image of both the brands and Philippine Fashion Week.

1998

FILIPINOS wised up after the burst of the Asian economic bubble. Philippine Fashion Week introduced the concept of the diffusion or bridge lines of foreign labels in which clothes made in Asia were sold at a fraction of the price of the original lines. Such brands as Marithe et François Girbaud generated volumes in sales without compromising its trendy, expensive image.



1999

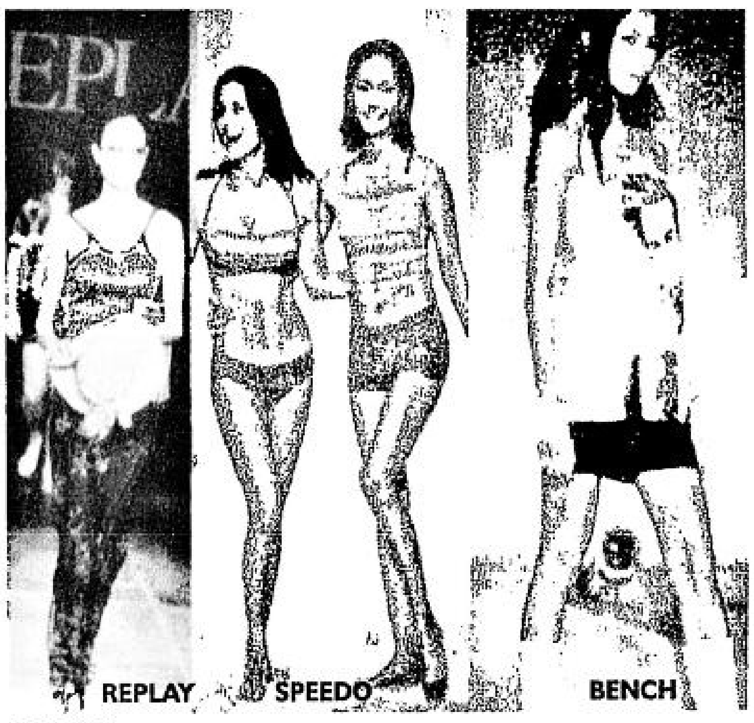
ALTHOUGH local entrepreneurs were still under seige, they either joined the fray by acquiring foreign franchises or by reinventing themselves. Filipino retailers like Cinderella brought in foreign labels that were affordable to the hard-nosed middle-class consumers. Filipinos also got fashion down to a science with its network of suppliers and adherence to trend cycles.

2000

FASHION scene diversifies, ranging now from franchises such as Hugo Boss (above left), foreign brands with local manufacturing such as Lee and Speedo, and designer clothes such as the Australian EsAc (above right).

2001

GLOBAL cosmetic brand Avon joins the event and projects itself as classy by presenting a color palette and looks that are aligned with international forecasts. Fashion Week provides consumers information on the current trends.



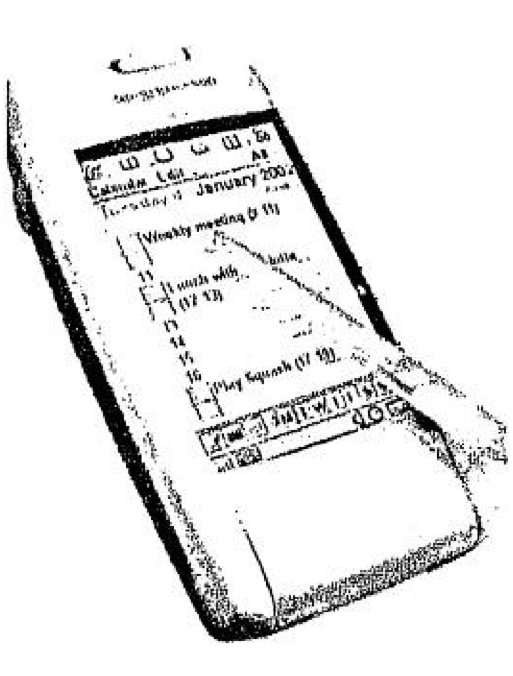
2002

LOCAL brands flex their muscles and compete side by side with the foreign labels. They flaunt a classy, imported image through heavy advertisements to help move their inexpensive merchandise. Fashion Week unites the fragmented Filipino designers, especially those who lack financial back-up, by providing the venue, lights and sounds, models, stylists, dressers ... the works.

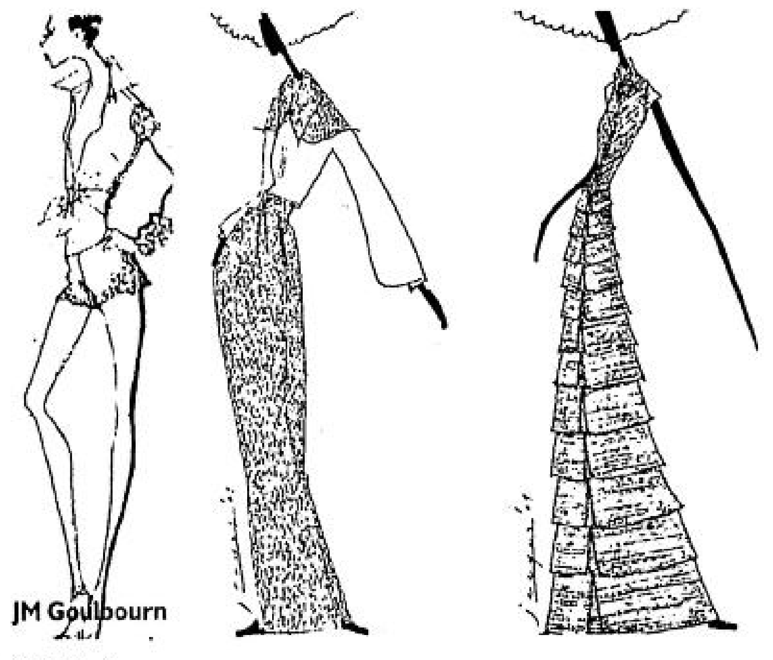
VITTORIO Barba
PENSHOPPE
LIZ Claiborne for Men

2003

THE SCENE today: many options at various price levels. Fashion Week presents imported brands whose prices are at par with those of local brands; foreign brands with licensing agreements; sportswear as high fashion; and local brands aspiring for the global image. Local designers no longer cling to the de rigueur swimwear-to-bridal-entourage collection as they became more specialized.

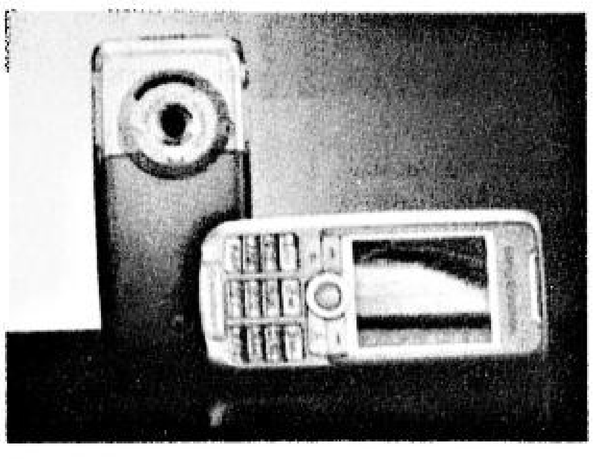


A NON-FASHION brand such as Sony Ericsson participates. The launch of the P800, the phone-cum notebook, creates a stir in the market. Like clothing, handphones, regardless of the brand, follow the trend cycle of novelty, maturation and obsolecence.



2004

THE OLD Guard (who insists that 60 is the new 40) still rules, yet Philippine Fashion Week looks around at the rising stars of the moment and hopes that the regional and young designers are the right stuff to develop into strong contenders for the crown. If the new ones play their cards right, their careers are sure to take an upward trajectory, and they will be major players in local fashion's rebirth. One designer to watch is James Reyes, who is known for his conceptual approach. His latest collection (above) was inspired by Oscar Wilde's era.



K700: it's also a phone

ASIDE from a gorgeous date, the coolest accessory these days is a camera phone.

Being launched in the ongoing Philippine Fashion Week is Sony Ericsson's K700, an elegant handset and digital camera back to back. It is a tri-band GSM/GPRS widget that features imaging, multimedia and entertainment functions, plus advanced messaging and connectivity technologies.

With the integrated VGA camera, consumers can take still pictures as well as video clips and either store them in the phone memory or send them as a message or e-mail.

At P24,000, the K700 has a 32 MB memory that can store up to 450 photos and a 16-bit TFT high-resolution display (176 by 220) pixels. The VGA 4x digital zoom camera with flash guarantees better exposure in dark environments. Video recording can last up to two minutes. Other features are the Bluetooth, infrared and cable connectivity, a Java for playing bundled and downloaded games, and Mascot Capsule 3D graphics platform application support. And, it's got a built-in FM radio and a Media Player.

ALEX Bitong for Men

In the grip of RP fashion

How the hard-nosed middle-class consumer–and eventually, the traditionally snobbish elite–switched to homegrown brands

By Marge C. Enriquez

THE KLEIG lights are blinding, the music is turned up, models are sashaying on the ramp.

Fashion followers are cordoned off from the hoi poloi at the Glorietta Activity Center. Once again, the whole place is in the grip of Philippine Fashion Week, which runs until April 30.

Runway Productions, the organizing company, fights an uphill battle as it replicates the esteemed New York, Paris, London, Milan, Australia and Hong Kong series of catwalk shows and exhibitions. The volatile economy and the uncertainty of the political climate have been taking their toll on the industry.

Joey Espino, Runway president, admits there were big challenges in organizing the event, abetted by the wait-and-see attitude of businessmen holding on to their purse strings. Nonetheless, the optimistic director says Fashion Week is in a healthy condition overall, thanks to the event presenter, Sony Ericsson, major sponsors Avon and Wella and supporters, Ayala Center and Hotel Intercontinental. Older brother, Audie, Runway's COO, handles the nitty-gritty.

Leaking roof

The first PFW was mounted in 1997, when Ayala Center requested Espino to organize an event for Glorietta that would lure shoppers. It coincided with the plan of Espino's clients' to market themselves via a runway show.

At that time, Ayala Center and local retailers were clueless about the logic of such an undertaking "I had a hard time convincing tenants," recalls Espino. "When I made a presentation for the summer show, they thought I was an Ayala employee. They wanted to discuss their concerns, such as drippings from the roof, the fluctuation of the peso against the dollar, and the rising competition from imported brands. I assured them I knew where they were coming from, but I said the first thing to do was educate the market properly, and that was why we needed to have a fashion week. They understood. Brands were formally introduced on a major scale."

Major label shows were financed by Runway's clients and Ayala Malls and its tenants. There were also group shows where, with pooled resources, brands were presented together.

Espino compares the results of that first Fashion Week to a successful product launch: "Anything new is usually lapped up by the market. The clients were happy because the shows generated sales."

He recounts that local brands were at first intimidated by the prospect of appearing with foreign labels. But the fortunes have reversed. As the economic times got tougher, the hard-nosed middle-class consumer—and eventually, the traditionally snobbish elite, too—switched to homegrown brands which, to their credit, tremendously improved in style and quality.

"The local brands were caught flat-footed at first," says Espino. "Then they realized they had to adopt a global look. They offered the market better options, attractive merchandising and display, and launched enigmatic campaigns.

Raising consciousness

By the late 1990s, many local brands were subcontracting to neighboring countries to cut down on manufacturing costs and get better supplies. Some collections were still produced in the country under strict quality control.

According to Espino, the PFW shows also aims to teach people about the possibilities of local clothing. "When you go to a store, you see all types of denims. Which ones should the consumers be made aware of? Should a label be bought because it wears well and feels good, or because it is popular? The way I see it, the market should patronize brands that show great concern for the end user. I touch the garments during the shows. There are local manufacturers that offer quality clothing at reasonable prices but the market is not aware of this."

Raising people's consciousness and democratizing style and fashion are Philippine Fashion Week's raison d'etre, Espino stresses. "Brands that do well, promote. They have to do it consistently. You can't build a brand name in a single show, though. You should be visible all year round—this is a responsibility to the public. Customers are always on the lookout for new items. Even if the times are hard, the responsible retailer should consistently educate its market."

When PFW included *sur-measure*, or made-to-measure, designers, Espino had a noble cause: to promote Filipino talent. Runway Productions has been inviting designers from all over the country to present their collections at no cost.

P1.5 M budget

In Thailand and Singapore, he says, local designers are backed up with solid financing and manufacturing. "They are patronized alongside the foreign labels, giving the market a wider selection. The Filipino designer needs more pushing ... and push. If we don't push what we have, if we don't show what's available, then one, the market will not be interested; two, consumers will pick up the wrong pieces; or three, they will make other businesses grow where there are better options."

Fashion Week's exposure is well-covered by the print and broadcast media. Although a single runway show in Glorietta costs at least P1.5 million (and double the cost at NBC Tent), the return of that in media coverage alone is worth millions more. Participants benefit from free advertising that definitely widen their industry networks. News designers and brands have been known to get instant acceptance after the show.

Espino cites Ole Morabe as an example. After Morabe got rave reviews, new clients found their way to his heretofore hard-to-find shop.

To Espino, it's all in a day's work. "Fashion Week is done in other countries. If we don't do it here, we will maintain this Third-World mentality.

What's hot this summer

FOLK

SENSUAL

URBAN

Cool locks

EXPERTS have pat hair trends down to a science.

Wella's Trend Vision Workshop in Belgium gathered trendspotters and stylists who identified the season's cool looks.

This summer hair styles and colors are diverse. The folk inspiration features thick hair with natural golden highlights, evoking a sun-kissed look. The hair is wavy or curly and wild or pulled back in ponytails, braids and knots.

The urban style is characterized by contrasting color tones, bold streaks and highlights ranging from blond to warm brown. The hair style is either short and asymmetrical, or unruly curls or straight hair combed in various directions with individually separated strands.

The sensual style favors medium to long hair with golden waves or sensually tied knots, similar to the 1970s look. A contrast is the blunt China doll cut with the perfect fringe. Colors are dark, ranging from intense browns to red to ebony. The highlights are metallic.

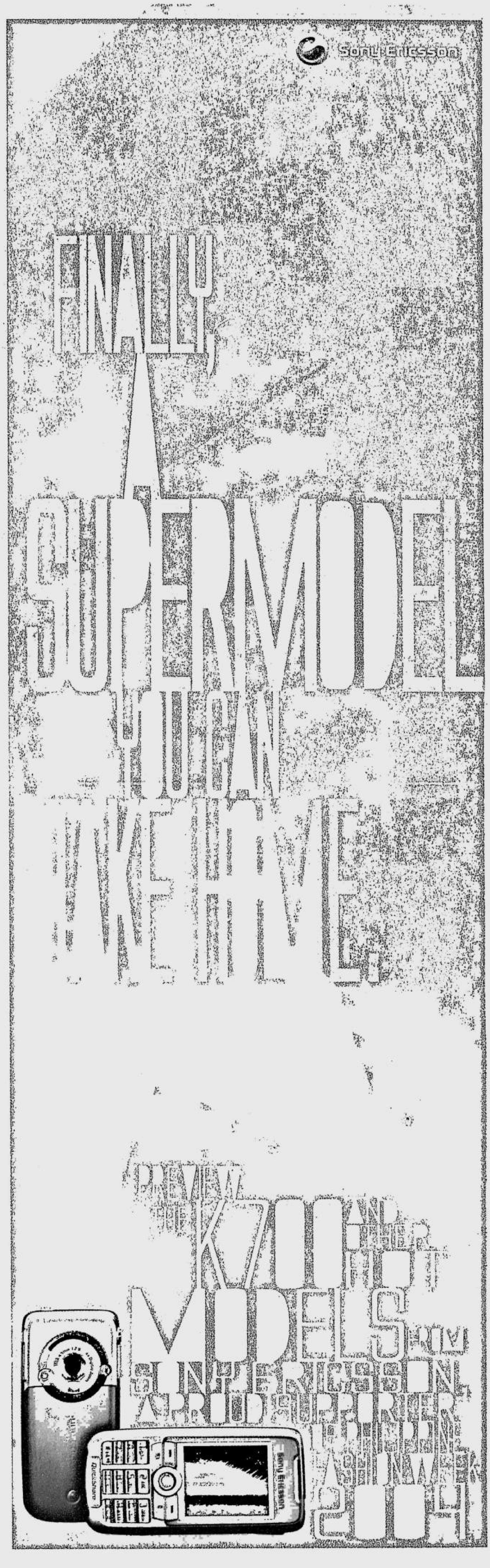
Subtly sensual

ALTHOUGH pink lipstick and neon eye shadow is the look for summer, Avon's forecast is practical and classic, yet subtly sensual.

The mouth is central, but it's equally important not to neglect the eyes. Avon Color is touting red in such shades as cherry, berry and rose. Its premiere product this summer is the Ultra Rich Renewable Lipstick, whose special gel makes the lips sparkle when kissed. The eye colors come in mauve, brown and deep blue, the better to flatter the Filipina's eyes.

NATURAL

VAMP


Sony Ericsson
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PREVIEW THE K700 AND OTHER HOT MODELS FROM SONY ERICSSON, A PROUD SUPPORTER OF PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK 2004
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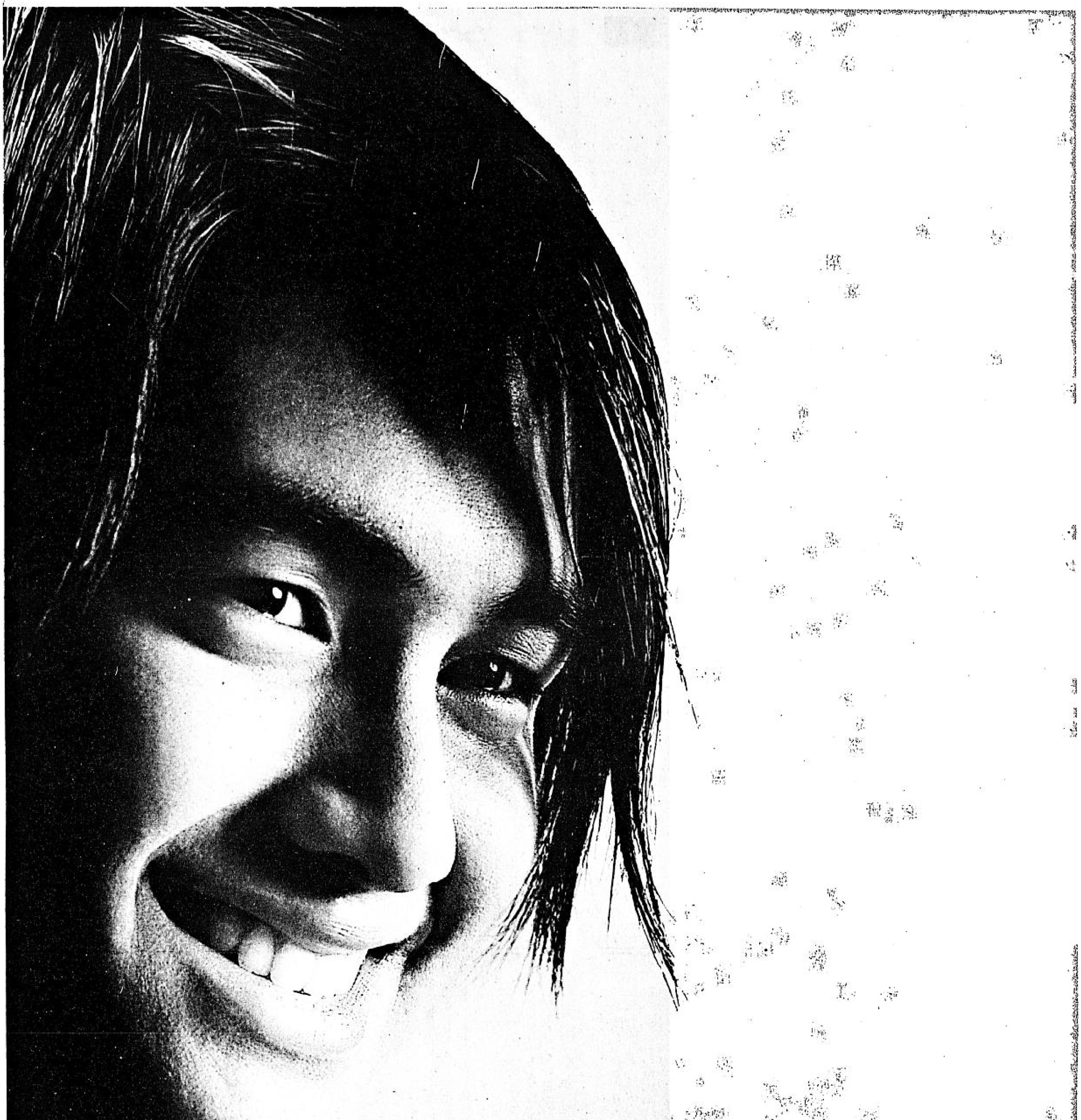
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ABANGAN ANG LUNAR ECLIPSE SA MAY 5!

Junior Inquirer Special

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2004 ✦ 8 PAGES ✦ VOLUME 1, NUMBER 12

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● Space Female Page 3
● Your Poetry Page 4
● Maikling Kuwento: Ang Autograph Book Page 4
Shirley's Pets, The Lunch Box, and Atomo and Weboy Page 7
More summer activities! Page 8

FOUR-LEGGED HEROES

Two dogs, cat honored for saving lives

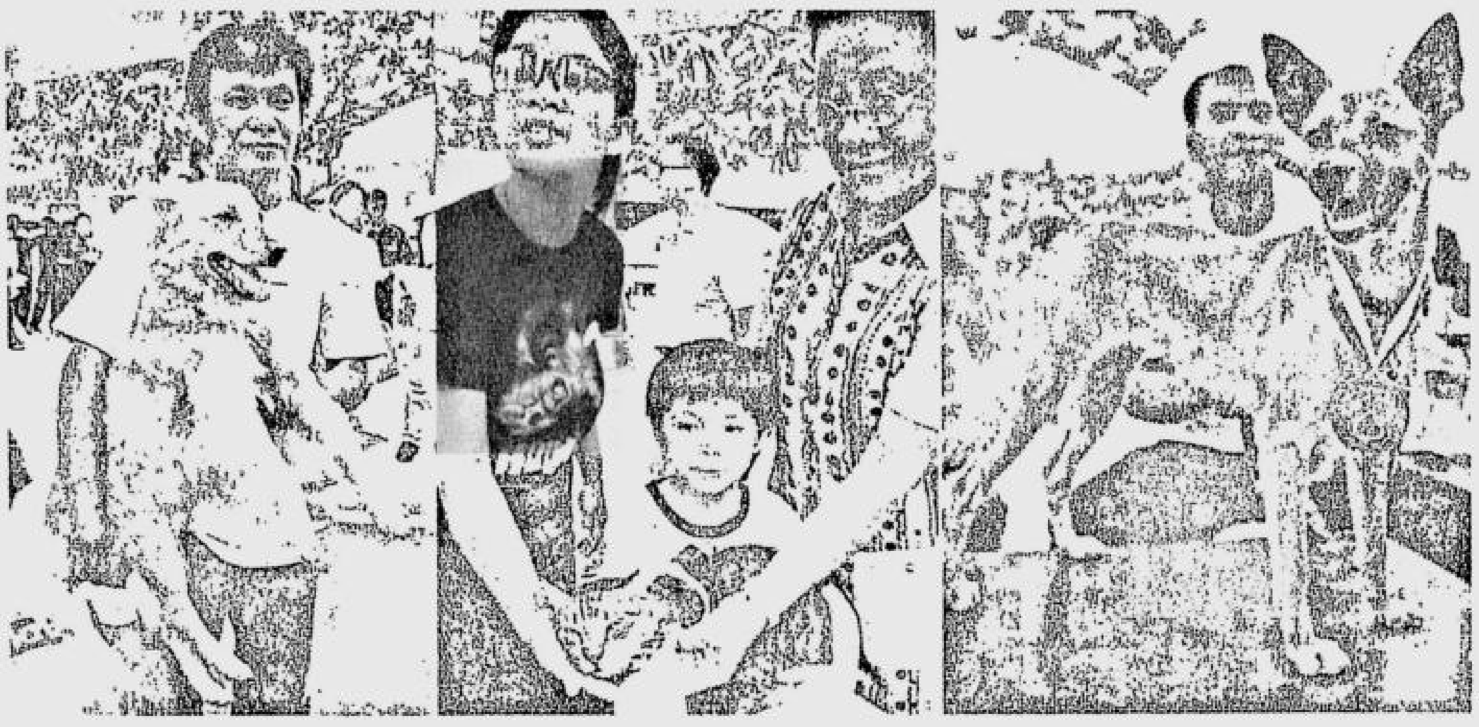
TWO dogs and a cat—all of native breed—were given an award and lots of yummy food for saving their human companions' lives from danger.

Pache, a 1-year-old dog from New Manila, and Toby, a former stray cat of unknown age both saved their humans from fires. Six-year-old dog Dagul, saved his human from a landslide in Baguio City.

They were all given the first ever Golden Paw Award by the Philippine Animal Welfare Society in a ceremony in Libis, Quezon City.

The award was also given posthumously to animals who rendered services which benefited people and their communities.

Two dogs/ p. 7



BEST PALS. L to R: Dagul, Toby and Pache receive the first Golden Paw Award medals for their "valor, loyalty and love for human kind." ROGER CARPIO

Mars Travel Hazard: Electric Mini-Tornadoes

IF HUMANS ever go to Mars, they may find electric mini-tornadoes that could make toxic dust stick to their spacesuits, researchers said.

NASA scientists have already detected whirlwinds and duststorms on Mars, and they figure they may generate electric charges just as small tornadoes on Earth do.

"There's probably an electrical environment to Mars which up to now has gone unmeasured," William Farrell of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center said by telephone. "Chances are probably pretty good that the same kind of physics is going on there that's going on here."

While the earthly electrical environment is most commonly seen during thunderstorms, Farrell said, "On Mars that may also be occurring, but driven by dust storms and dust devils."

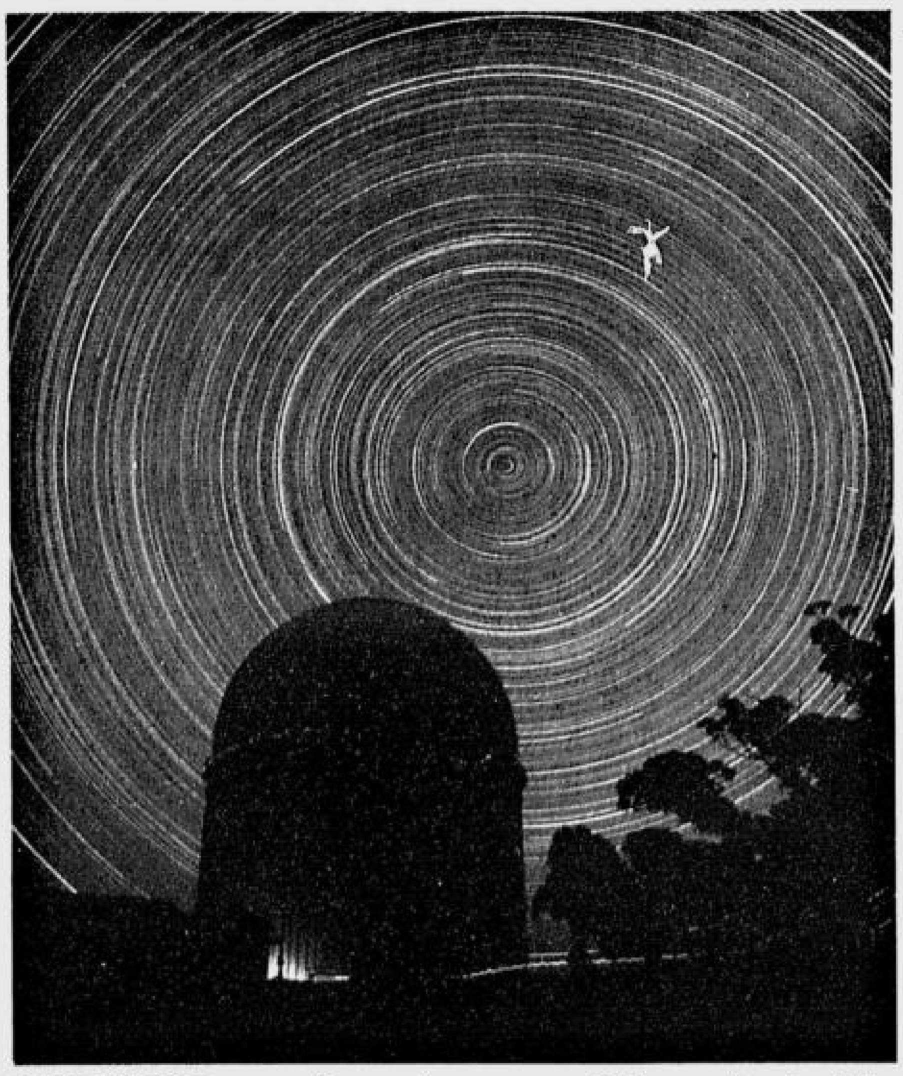
A dust devil on Earth is a tornado ranging in size from 10 to 100 yards with winds ranging from 20 to 60 miles per hour swirling around a hot column of rising air. Dust particles rub together in the twister to create an electric charge, much as shuffling across a carpeted floor can build up static electricity.

On Mars, jumbo-sized dust devils can range up to 500 yards across with heights of several thousand yards, Farrell and his fellow researchers said in a statement. Their findings were published last week in the Journal of Geophysical Research.

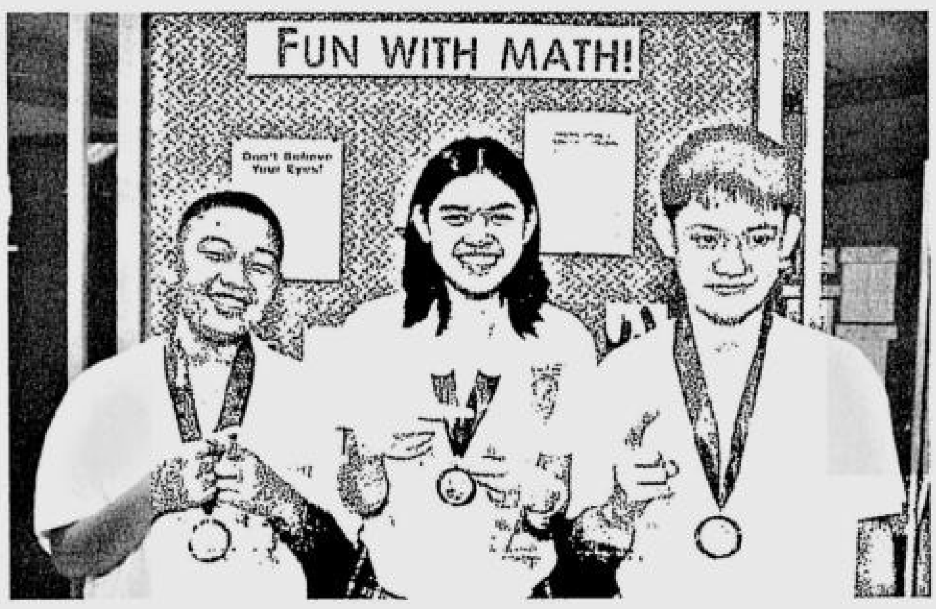
Beyond this, there are huge dust storms that can cover whole regions of Mars or even the whole planet, and can last for months.

Farrell said dust devils on a martian scale could cause problems for human visitors.

"If you're an astronaut and you're stuck in this for three months, it's not going to make your life any easier," he said. *Reuters*



STAR TRAILS trace silver spheres around the south celestial pole above the Anglo-Australian Siding Spring Observatory, used to search the universe for around 1,000 giant asteroids that could be headed for Earth. The observatory is the only probe to have a clear view of the southern sky. AFP


FUN WITH MATH!
Don't Believe Your Eyes!

Bicol and NCR ace math tilt

By Eline Santos

SIXTH-GRADERS from the Bicol Region and the National Capital Region dominated this year's nationwide Metrobank-MTAP-DepEd Challenge.

They bested around 200,000 elementary students from all over the country in the contest's various elimination and semi-final rounds.

Hykinel Bon Guarte of the Sorsogon Pilot Elementary School in Sorsogon City won the top place in the individual category, while Stephanie Oliveros and Jomo-Vitto Simbuli of De La Salle Santiago Zobel in Muntinlupa won first place for the team category.

Stephanie and Jomo of De La Salle Santiago Zobel took first place in the team category. Trixia Marie Ebol and Chinmary Rose Rivera from Dadiangas West Central Elementary School in General Santos City won second place.

Twelve-year-old Almer Macahilo of the West Visayas State University in Iloilo won second place in the individual category. He also took third place in the team category together with teammate, John Sen Macainan.

Dragon Eats Moon on May 5

THAT might be how headlines would have read thousands of years ago when people believed a lunar eclipse was actually a dragon trying to eat the moon.

On May 5, the Philippine's third total lunar eclipse since the start of the new millennium will occur.

At 2:50 a.m., the dark shadow (umbra) will begin to cover the moon. Total coverage is expected around 4:30 a.m. and will last until 5:10 a.m.

During this phase, the moon is expected to have a shade of red around it.

Families cycle for clean air

CYCLING is a family affair for some of the participants who joined the 6th Tour of the Fireflies.

The Ricardo family has been joining the event for four years, with 12-year-old Catrina Rasha winning the costume competition in 2003.

This time, Catrina was dressed as a bird and let Guyito hitch a ride on her handlebars. First-timers Clara, 10, and Czarina, 9, joined as insects.

"I joined so that our country will become clean and pollution will be lessened," said Clara, an incoming sixth-grader at St. Vincent de Paul Academy in Novaliches.

Bug-Biking Brothers

Two brothers on their dragon-headed bug bikes won second and third place for their getups.

Nine-year-old Ridan Ayryl and 6-year-old Ayrlron Luke Arellano, students of JASMS Quezon City, had huge grins when they won.

"I didn't expect that I would be in second place," Ayryl said.

From 6-year-old Mervie Jumayao to 74-year-old Bob Sarreal, cyclists of all ages pedaled 50 km through six Metro Manila cities to promote cycling as alternative, green transportation.

It's not a race against each other, said Dinna Dayao of the Firefly Brigade.

"It's racing against time to clean the air," said Dayao. *Eline Santos*

Anime Idol

By Eline Santos

KOJI Sawai, director of ".hack//Legend of the Twilight," traveled all the way from Tokyo, Japan to meet his fans during the Animax Carnival held at the Ayala Center in Makati.

The series revolves around the twins Shuugo and Rena Kunisaki who take on the characters of legendary .hackers Kite and Black Rose in an online role-playing game known as "The World."

Koji says that this was a challenging anime for him because he used 12 frames per second instead of the usual eight. He did this to make the actions smoother and show more of the character's facial expressions.

Hard put to name a favorite character, Koji says he loves them all. He does consider "Ranma 1/2" (TV season 2-5) one of his most memorable series because it was his debut into animation.

SAWAI

"Don't only watch '.hack,'" says Koji. "Watch all anime. Enjoy our animation from Japan."

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Child-Friendly Awardee
UNICEF-PPI Child-Friendly Newspaper and Journalist Awards

2003 Best Children's Newspaper Awardee

A Summer that Flies

IT'S vacation time! You could be watching your favorite TV show. Or maybe you're on the verge of defeating that high-level monster in your latest computer game.

Then your mom sighs and says, "Dont you want to do something more productive?"

Uh-oh. Even if we don't want to admit it, mom does have a point. Good thing "productive" does not have to mean "boring."

Summer vacation is a golden opportunity to learn fun stuff in all the different workshops going on. From acting classes to swimming lessons, kitchen camps and memory-enhancing seminars, something interesting is always around for the budding artist, athlete, chef or true-blue academic.

When two sisters tried teaching for a summer, they liked it so much they wanted to do it again. Check out Chesca and Alex's story on page 6.

Summer is also an ideal time to clean up your room. Before groaning, consider that it would make a great Mother's Day gift, which is only 12 days away.

Why not bond with mom in the wee hours of May 5 by watching the total lunar eclipse together?

Heck, who says it only has to be on Mother's Day anyway! She's bound to love any creative thoughtfulness from you anytime, anywhere.

Just keep in mind, when she asks us to do something better with our time, it's just her way of saying she loves us.

One way we can love her back is to make the most of our summer. When we strive to be the best we can be, we make ourselves and our parents proud. *Eline Santos*

ATTENTION: ALL HARRY POTTER FANS!

What: Essay & Art Contest

When: 1 p.m., May 30, 2004

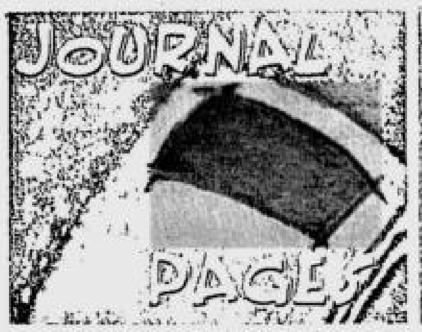
Where: Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City

Fabulous Harry Potter gifts await you!

Check out next month's JI special for the juicy details.

WE need writers

IF YOU'RE 10-12 years old and can write very good essays, news and feature stories, we would like to hear from you! Write a 200-300 word essay about your most memorable experience in school and send it to the editor at nvizcarra@inquirer.com.ph with your contact details.



Treasuring Special Moments

A Reflection by Filbert Tiu
Xavier School
Greenhills, San Juan

NOW that my Xavier Grade School days have ended, I can truly say that I enjoyed every moment I spent as I went through my long journey here in Xavier.

I will definitely remember and treasure all my experiences the past nine years. I had to work hard and yet I had a great time with all my friends, teachers, classmates, and fellow Xavierians.

I can still recall the many events and moments, each one helping to shape me and make me into the person I am today. All the things I learned and applied in life are now about to be used as the foundation for the next step in my Xavier journey.

Each one of these experiences I shall always cherish in a special place in my heart—the lessons in the classroom; the Alay Buhat to assist our young brothers in the lower grades; the extra-curricular activities; and the Student Council.

There was also our Ignatian Night; the recollections and various interactions; the time spent in the Learning Resource Center; the meals I ate in the canteen with my friends, the pleasant chats I had with my teachers; the enjoyable time at the Fair; and the games we played in the quadrangle and gym.

Indeed, I will miss Xavier Grade School—every rock I stepped on, every ground I stood upon, every corridor I passed, every floor I went to, every classroom I entered, every place I have been to, every person I encountered, everything I learned.

All of them will always be in my heart as I move on to High School. I would like to say thank you to Xavier Grade School for helping me become a better individual, a better Christian and a better man of God for others that lets his light shine.

Farewell, Xavier Grade School, and thanks for the special memories!

A Dream Come True

By Tracy Conclara
Bacolod City
Negros Occidental

I HAD to admit, it was fun!

My friend Jennica and I were writing a story.

I learned that I could express my thoughts and feelings. I let my imagination fly right into the piece of paper!

Thanks to my best friend, Jennica, I've discovered that I do have a talent in writing.

After that, I wrote more stories, poems and essays. I let some of my classmates read my work and they complimented me on my work.

One day, my English teacher told me that if I had some stories, I could send them to her.

I was so excited. The next morning, I gave her a copy of my best one. Unfortunately, she said that some of my grammar were incorrect. She also said something about the piece not stating a clear point.

I was so depressed after talking to her. But that didn't stop me from writing stories.

The next school year, I joined the Junior Journalists Club which publishes our school newspaper, the Wee Dove.

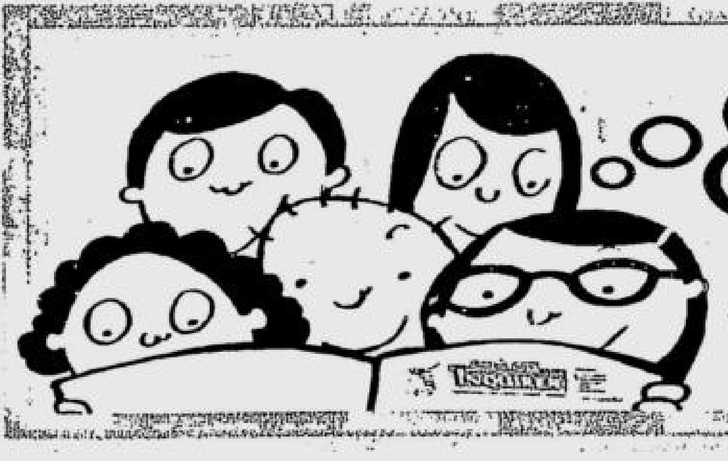
We were assigned to write different topics for the newspaper. Our moderator assigned me to the Literary section. That meant I had the freedom to write anything! Any topic my heart desired!

I was so stunned when I saw my story published for the first time.

I encouraged myself and decided I should write more. I want to inspire readers with my work.

This is just the beginning of my writing career and I always pray to God that He may guide me everyday until I am the best writer I can be.

Sound Familiar ?
Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!



Straight from JI Readers

You can reach us via e-mail! Our address is ji@inquirer.com.ph
Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and phone number.
Hope to hear from you soon!

Harry Potter Celphone Tunes

WATCH out for the movie "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" on June 2004!

Here's something I play on my cell phone. I hope all you other Harry Potter fans enjoy this!

"Something wicked this way comes..." Type:

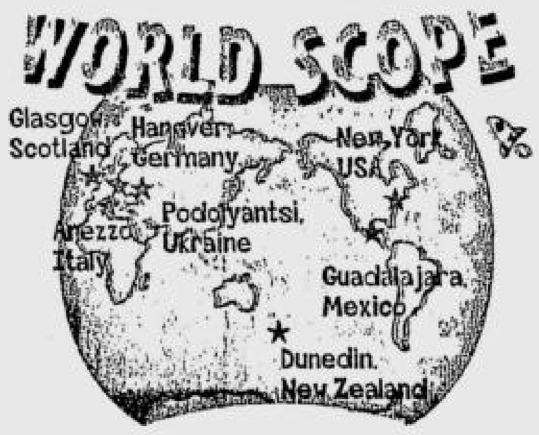
688 5 69 68 5 69 6# 5 6 6 6 58 4 59 3 3 3 6 6 28 3 49 28 3 49 5 3 6 6 29 288 39 3 6 699 2*88 2999 288 29 2 1# 1# 29

Tempo is 90-100. It'll look like this on your cell phone composer:16a1 16g1 8a1 19a1 19g1 8a1 8#a1 8g1 8a1 8a1 8a1 16g1 16f1 8g1 8e1 8e1 8e1 8a1 8a1 16d1 16e1 8f1 16d1 16e1 8f1 8g1 8e1 8a1 8a1 4d1 16d1 8e1 8e1 8a1 2a1 8d2 1d2 4d2 16d2 8d2 8d2 8#c2 8#c2 4d2. Enjoy my fellow "Potterholics"!

MARIA REYLAN GARCIA, 13, Colegio de las Hijas de Jesus, Iloilo City

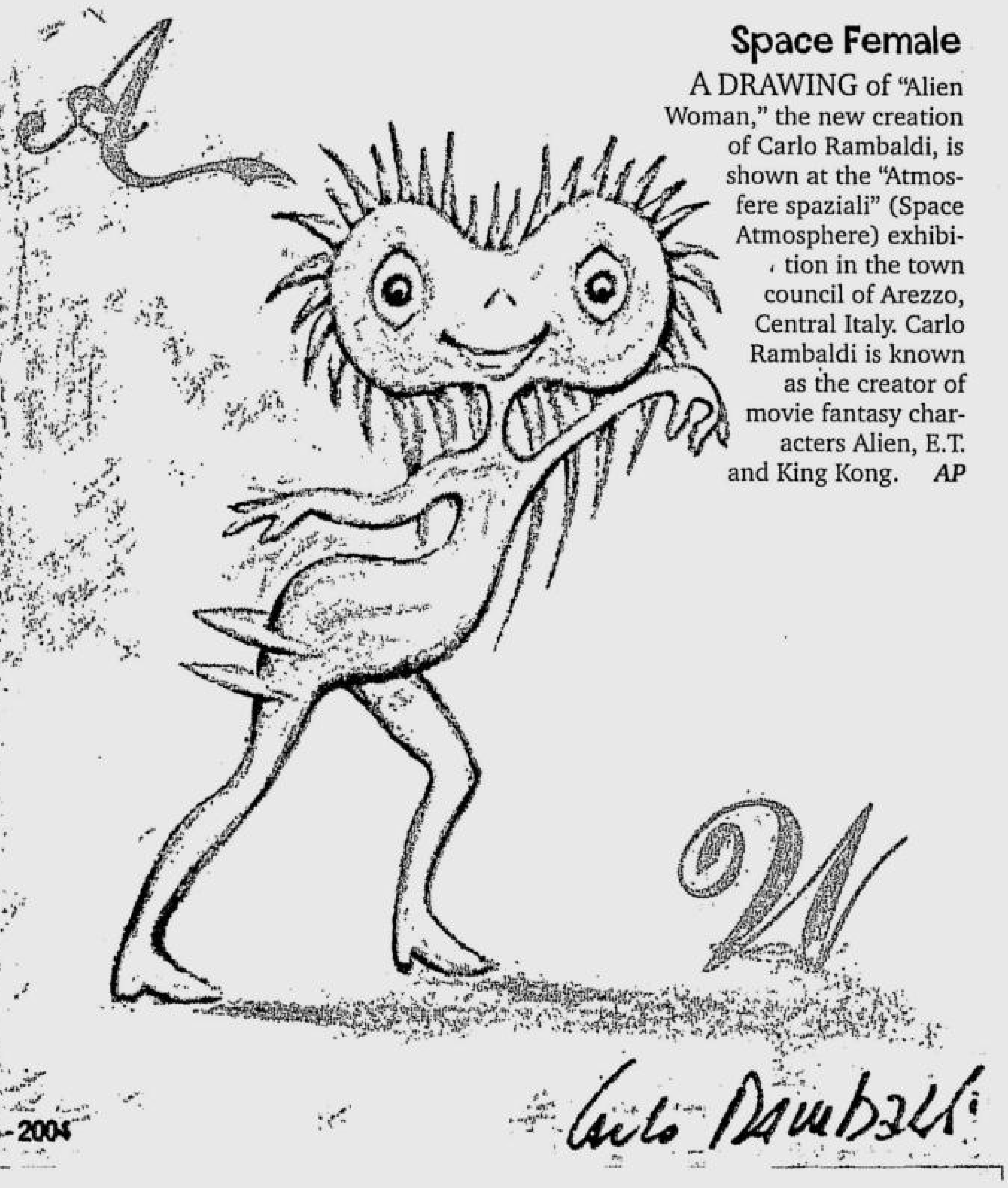
Powered By Air Pressure

GERMAN Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder jokes as he sits on a trike, which is powered by air pressure. The trike was on exhibit at the Hanover industrial fair. *AP*



Hi-tech Toy

ROBOSAPIEN's seven motors let it run and walk at different speeds, perform 180 degree turns, dance, twist, blink and fight. The brainchild of NASA scientist Dr. Mark W. Tilden, Robosapien needs no complex set-up and will run on regular alkaline batteries for up to 15 hours. It will be available in US Gadget Shops beginning May 22. *AFP*

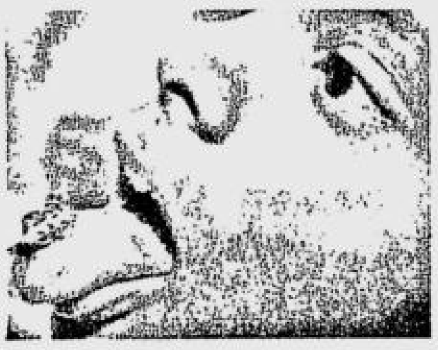


Space Female

A DRAWING of "Alien Woman," the new creation of Carlo Rambaldi, is shown at the "Atmosfere spaziali" (Space Atmosphere) exhibition in the town council of Arezzo, Central Italy. Carlo Rambaldi is known as the creator of movie fantasy characters Alien, E.T. and King Kong. *AP*

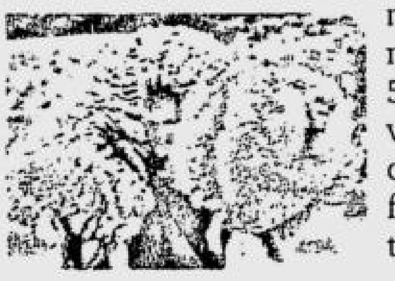
Crunchy Bugs

AMANDA Cipriana, a nine-year-old fourth-grader from PS/IS 208 in Queens, New York shows off a cricket before she eats it at New York's American Museum of Natural History on Tuesday, April 20. The culinary challenge promoted the museum's upcoming "Adventures in a Global Kitchen" program and showing of "A Rainforest Adventure—BUGS!" *AP*



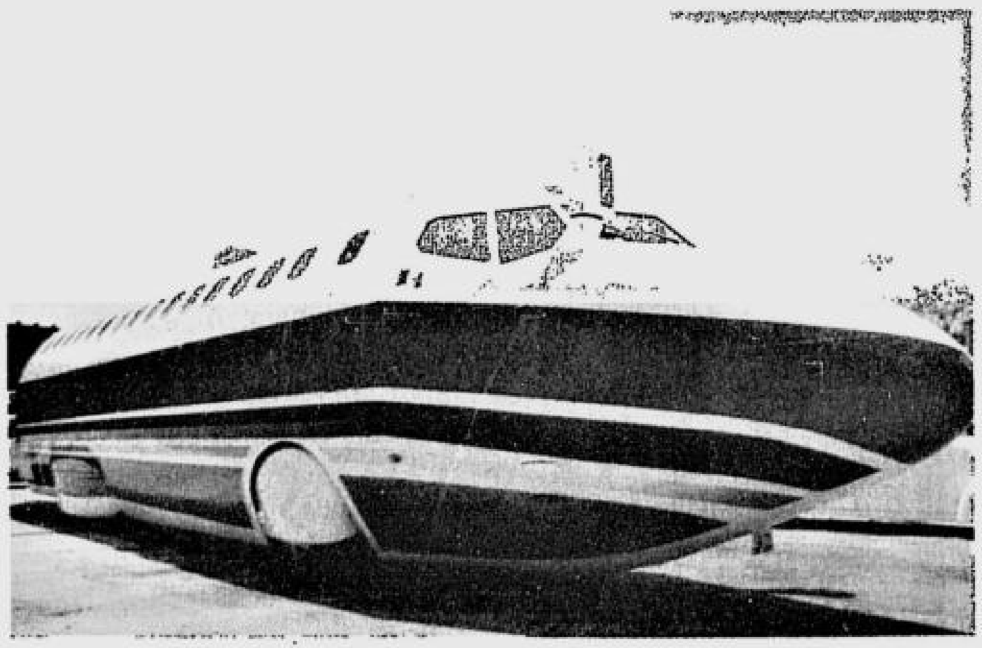
A Hairy Tale

SHEPHERD Daniel Devine carries "Shrek," a 10-year-old merino, at a sheep station near Dunedin on New Zealand's South Island. The hermit merino, who evaded roundups for six years, was found at 5,000 feet on Bendigo Station where it used rock caves to survive deep winter snow while eating alpine plants. Station owner John Perriam has decided to let Shrek keep his coat for now after nationwide interest. He said the wool is more than 30 cm long "but pure white." *Reuters*



Limo-Plane

A PLANE turned into limousine with a Mercedes Benz car chassis and a diesel engine is being offered for tourists for US $1,000 for three hours, in Guadalajara, state of Jalisco in Mexico. The limousine-plane will start working next week. *AFP*



Walking Tall in Ukraine

OLENA Stadnyk (R) looks on as her son Leonid swings on a fence near their house in Podolyantsi village in Ukraine's Zhytomyr region, about 200 km from the capital Kiev. Stadnyk, who stands 2.53 metres (8 feet 4 inches) tall, can easily be a contender for the title of the world's tallest living man. *Reuters*

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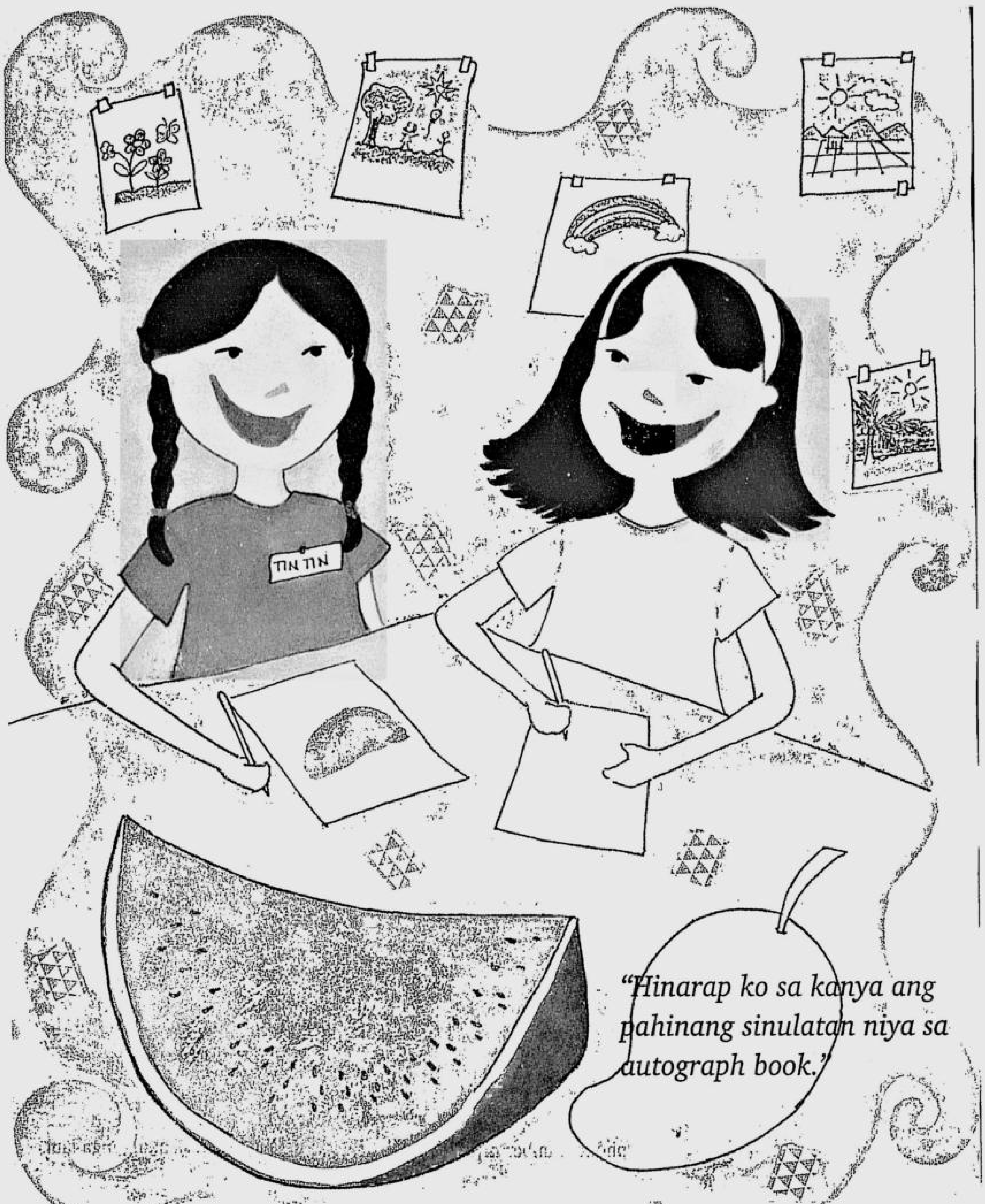


"Hinarap ko sa kanya ang pahinang sinulatan niya sa autograph book."

Ang Au

Kuwento ni Annacris C. Llanera
Guhit ni Mitzi Villavecer

BINASA ko ulit ang ilan sa mga sinulat ko sa autograph book ng kaklase ko.

Name: Maricel Mendoza
Nickname: Sel
Favorite color: yellow
Favorite food: sinigang na baboy
Best friend: Joy

Maricel ang pangalan ko, hindi dahil sa sikat na artista, kundi dahil ito ang pangalan ng pinakamatalik na kaibigan ni Nanay. Dilaw ang paborito kong kulay kaya dilaw ang mga dingding ng kuwarto ko, ng kabinet ko, at pati na rin ng bag na bitbit ko. Ayaw ko ng nilaga, adobo, inihaw o piniritong baboy, dahil nasasarapan lang ako sa sinigang na baboy. Best friend ko si Joy, na simula ng taong ito ay parati kong katabi sa recess, sa klase, at sa paghintay sa mga sundo namin.

Pagkaraan ng isang linggo, sa huling araw bago magbakasyon, hiniram ko ulit ang autograph book para tingnan ang mga sagot ni Joy.

Name: Joylynn Santos
Nickname: Joy
Favorite color: pink
Favorite food: Spaghetti
Best friend$\underset{\wedge}{\overset{s}{:}}$ Melay and Sel

Napakurap ako. Binasa ko ulit ang huling linya.

Best friend$\underset{\wedge}{\overset{s}{:}}$ Melay and Sel

Aba! Nag-init ang mukha ko sa inis. Si Joy ang best friend ko. Siya

lang ang pinag
sikreto ko. Natu
hay namin. Bak
na nakasulat dit
Alam kong
magkaibigan ni
sila madalas
magkasama. Hi
magkaklase ng
kaya kaming da
ang parating
Akala ko pa na
ang bago n
friend!
Pinuntahan k
narap ko sa ka
nang sinulatan
book.
"Bakit dalaw
sinulat mo sa 'b
Mukhang nag
"Kasi pareho
akin."
"Hindi pwede
pahina sa sinula
sa akin—nakala
best friend ko.
best friend mo!
friend mo?"
"Pareho nga k
"Burahin mo
Tumingin lan
di umimik. M
buburahin ang
nagsak ko ang
mesa niya at um
ngit.
Kinaumagaha
ang bakasyon.

LALONG kumu
wala akong kala
nanunood ng T
bro. Napansin
abagot ko.
"Sel, may co
mga bata!"

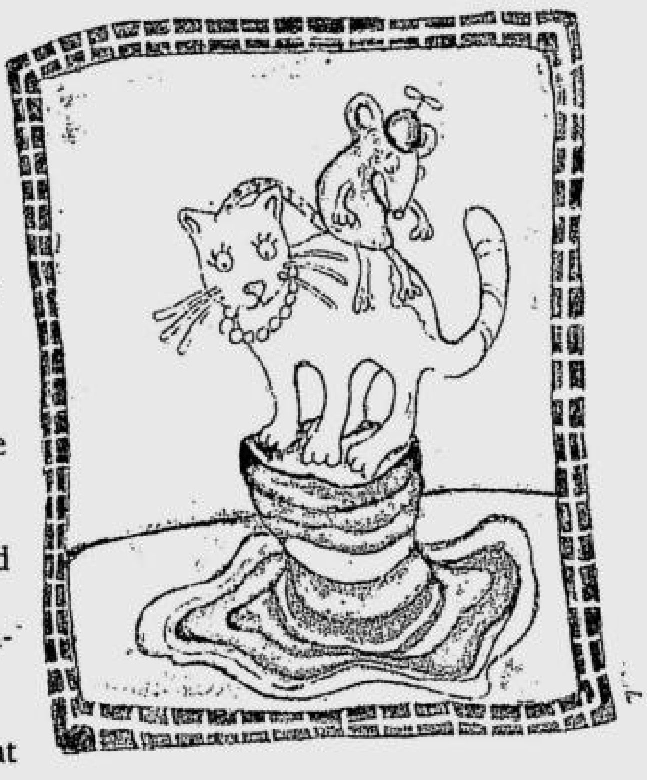
FOR or BY KIDS

Your Poetry!

Illustrations by Lyra Garcellano

The Cat, the Rat and the Hat

By Allen Grace Contreras



Cathy is a cat.
Ratie is a rat.
They are best friends despite of that.
They like to talk about their encounter
with the wonderful hat.

A year ago, when they were sitting on a mat,
They saw a wonderful hat.
It could sing, dance and chat.
Most of all, it was an expensive hat.

Cathy wanted to sell the hat
and buy food for cats.
Ratie wanted to keep it
and show it to the other rats.
Ratie took the hat in a click.
Cathy got mad so she gave him a kick.

The two animals didn't stop fighting.
They fought until evening.
Suddenly, a man in a tuxedo took the hat.
The two animals stopped and said, "Who's that?"

The man said, "I'm the owner of the hat.
I've been searching for that. Thanks for saving my long-lost hat."

In return, the rich man adopted the cat and the rat.

The cat and the rat thought about their spat
The cat said, "I'm so sorry about that."
The rat replied, "It's ok. I'm sorry, too.
Let us just forget the past."
The cat, the rat together with the hat
sat and chatted on the mat.

Allen Grace, 22, is an English teacher at P.B.T.S Academy in Rizal. She is an avid reader of JI.
Lyra is the creator of Atomo and Weboy.

A Man's Best Friend

By Roxanne Navarro

Of all the animals in the world
Of all the furry creatures I have heard
the animal with waggy tail and drooping ears
is the best pet that gives no tears!

She is like the most understanding person
That wags her tail when she sees me
Ok, she is sometimes messy
But she wants to be with me!

For me, my puppy is cute!
I always walk her around,
And when I let her see me
carrying another puppy
She barks and runs around!

I know she doesn't understand me
But it looks like she wants to.
She always makes me feel special
That's why she is my best friend, too!

Roxanne, 12, studies at Arclight School in Las Piñas.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ograph Book

asabihan ko ng mga
log na nga siya sa ba-
it biglang may Melay
o?
matagal na silang
Melay pero hindi ko
na nakikitang
ndi na kasi sila
nyong taon
lawa ni Joy
nagkasama.
man ako na
iyang best

o si Joy. Hi-
nya ang pahi-
niya sa autograph

kami ni Melay ang
est friend'?"
tataka pa siya.
kayong malapit sa

'yun!" Nilipat ko ang
tan ko. "Tingnan mo
gay na ikaw lang ang
Dapat isa lang ang
Sino sa amin ang best

ayo eh."
ng pangalan niya."
sa akin si Joy at hin-
ukhang hindi niya
angalan ni Melay. Bi-
autograph book sa
alis nang nagngingit-

n, nag-umpisa na

ot ang noo ko dahil
ro. Maghapon akong
V at nagbabasa ng li-
ni Nanay ang pagk-

oking classes para sa

"Ayaw ko po 'Nay."

"Anak, may dancing lessons diyan malapit sa atin, o!"

"Ayaw ko po 'Nay."

"Nabasa mo ba ito? May art lessons! 'Di ba mahilig ka sa art?"

"Ayaw ko po 'Nay."

Napabuntong-hininga na lang si Nanay.

Pero pagkaraan ng ilan pang mga araw, nanalo rin si Nanay. Hindi ko matiis ang walang ginagawa. Pinili ko ang art lessons.

Nang pumasok ako sa kuwarto, wala akong tinabihan. Pero pagdating ng art teacher, pinaupo kaming lahat sa harapan at nakatabi ko ang isang batang nakapulang T-shirt. "Tintin" and nakalagay sa name tag niya.

Hindi kami nagpapansinan noong una. May nakapatong na iba-ibang prutas sa isang mesa at sabi ng teacher, pumili raw kami ng isa at i-drowing.

Siyempre, pinili ko ang dilaw na dilaw na mangga. Pinili naman ni Tintin ang pulang-pulang pakwan.

Nahuli niya akong tinitingnan ang drawing niya. Nagtama ang mga paningin namin at ngumiti siya. Napangiti rin ako. Simula noon, parati na kaming magkatabi.

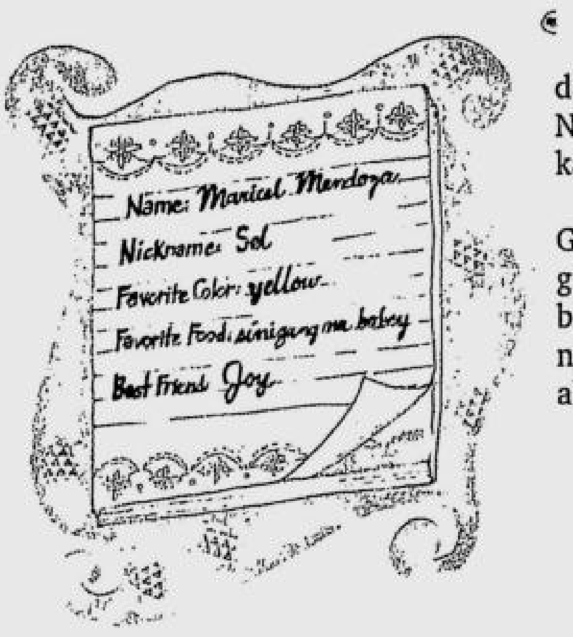
Lagi kaming magkasama pagkatapos ng klase, kapag hinihintay namin ang aming sundo. Lagi kaming nagkukuwentuhan tungkol sa mga paborito naming mga bagay. Pakiramdam ko, may bago na akong best friend!

NOONG kaarawan ni Tintin, inimbita niya ang buong klase sa kanyang bahay. Pagpasok ko, agad siyang ngumiti at umakbay sa akin.

"Sel, buti dumating ka!"

Syempre, hindi ko makakaligtaan ang kaarawan ng bagong kong best friend!

"Bakit dalawa kami ni Melay ang sinulat mo sa 'best friend'?"



Lumapit kami sa isang grupo na hindi ko kilala—mga kaklase niya pala. Kumalas sa grupo ang isa sa kanila.

"Sel, ito si Karen, ang best friend ko. Karen, si Sel. Siya yung kaibigan ko sa art class."

Nag-init ang ulo ko sa halong inis at hiya. Pero parang mas matimbang ang hiya dahil hindi pala ako ang best friend ni Tintin! Bago kumunot ang noo ko, inunahan ako ni Karen ng ngiti, at sinabing parati akong naikukuwento ni Tintin sa kanya.

ANG BAIT pala ni Karen. Mukhang natutuwa pa siyang makilala ako. Unti-unti kong naramdaman na natutunaw ang aking hiya.

Bago ako umalis, binigay ko kay Tintin ang regalo ko—mga colored pencils na nakabalot sa makintab na pulang papel. Laking gulat ko nang inabot niya sa akin ang drawing niya ng pakwan. Sa likod nito, may nakasulat:

Dear Sel,
Mami-miss kita. Tawagan mo 'ko!
Love,
Tintin

At sinulat niya sa ibaba ang telephone number niya.

Hindi lang si Tintin ang tinawagan ko noong bakasyon. Tinawagan ko rin si Joy para humingi ng tawad at sabihing ayos lang sa akin na kaming dalawa ni Melay ang best friend niya. Naging matalik na magkaibigan ulit kami ni Joy.

GUMAWA ako ng sarili kong autograph book mula sa lumang notebook na ginuhitan at kinulayan ko. At ngayon, sa unang araw ng pasukan, ako ang unang-unang sumulat.

Name: Maricel Mendoza
Nickname: Sel
Favorite colors: yellow, red, light blue, orange, pink
Favorite food: T.M.T.M. (too many too mention)
Best friends: Joy and Tintin

Hindi na lang dilaw ang kulay ng dingding ng kuwarto ko. Noong nagkita kami ng mga kaklase ko sa art class bago magpasukan, nagbigayan kami ng mga drawing namin sa isa't isa. Pinaskil ko ang lahat ng mga ito sa dingding ng kuwarto ko at napansin ko na magaganda rin pala ang ibang mga kulay.

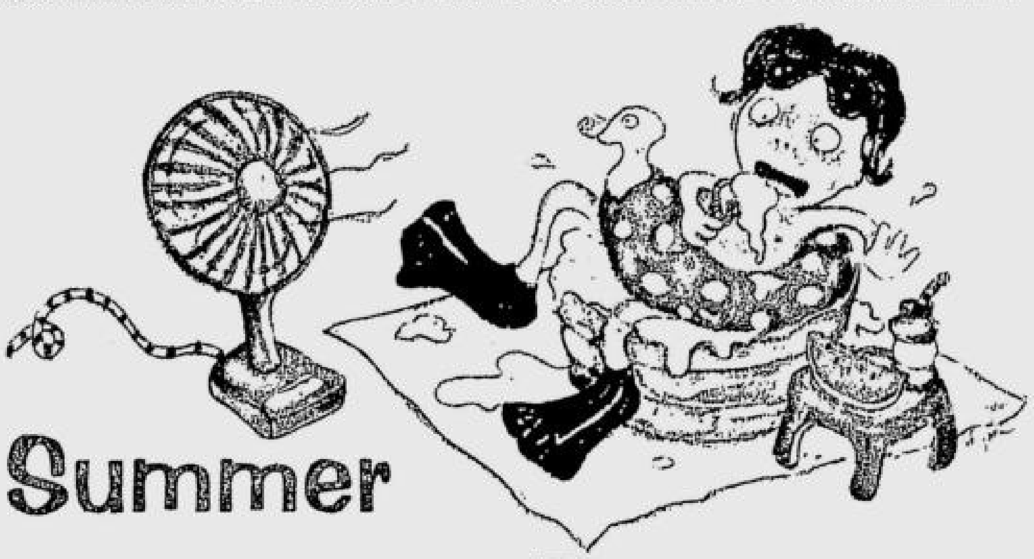
Nang natapos ang art lessons, nagpaturo naman ako kay Nanay na magluto. Tumulong ako sa pagluluto ng nilaga, adobo, inihaw, at pinirito—hindi lang ang baboy, pati na rin ang manok, isda at gulay. Ang dami palang masasarap na ulam! Natutuwa nga si Nanay na hindi na raw ako pihikan tulad ng dati.

Nagtatawagan pa rin kami ni Tintin hanggang ngayon. Baka nga kami magkita sa Sabado. Papasulatin ko siya sa autograph book ko.

Tumingala ako at nakita ko si Melay na mag-isang nagbabasa sa isang tabi. Magkaklase kami ngayong taon. Hmmm... ano kaya ang paborito niyang kulay at pagkain?

Tumayo ako at naglakad papunta sa kanya—ang autograph book sa isang kamay, isang bolpen sa kabila, at isang ngiti sa aking mga labi.

Si Annacris ay isang freelance writer.
Si Mitzi ay isang ilustrador para sa Adarna House, Inc.



Summer

By Lance Katigbak

Summer, summer
Definitely not a bummer.
When School is out
Nobody would want to pout
Gone is School
Down the Drain of the Swimming Pool
When School is Away
Life is so Gay
But then good things have to go
Summer also comes and goes
Then all the kids pretend
"Summer Summer, we're your friends!"
But no matter what they say
Summer cannot Stay.

Lance is an incoming Grade 5 student at PAREF-Southridge School Hillsborough in Muntinlupa. He has won first place in the Magic Tree House Story-Writing Contest and first place in the Scholastic Story Writing Contest. Lance loves to read and write. He makes websites, too. He has been a competitor in the MTAP-Decs NCR Math Challenge for 4 years in a row. Lance is turning 11 on May 3.

You can be on For or By Kids too!

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Confident Kat

This Covenant of Grace School student wants to be a teacher someday

By Eline Santos

UNLIKE people terrified of speaking in front of a crowd, 11-year-old Katrina Tagud feels quite comfortable in front of an audience.

The incoming sixth-grader from the Covenant of Grace School in Novaliches, Quezon City says it began when she won her first oratorical declamation contest in Grade 3.

"I was competing against Grade 6, Grade 4, and Grade 5 students," says Kat. Despite her nervousness, Kat won first place. That same year she also won their school's annual Ms CGS contest, again beating students older than herself.

Kat describes herself as a confident and active member in the performing arts club at school and the church choir.

She says her achievements—including being a first honor student and class officer—come not only from her self-confidence but from her faith in God.

"In everything that you do, the Lord is the one who gives you the strength to accomplish the task that He gave you," says Kat.

The incoming sixth-grader, who helps out her younger sister with her schoolwork, says it feels good to share what she knows with others. It's no surprise that someday she would like to be a teacher.

"Just be confident," says Kat. "Believe in what you are capable of doing. And if you can do it, share it with others."

Kids'r'rrific

WHETHER it's singing or speaking in front of an audience, Kat just gives her best with quiet confidence.

RUDY ESPERAS

R'RRIFIC?

'Rrific kids are smart
'Rrific kids are fun
Some aren't in the honors list
But get their homework done

Somehow the world's
a better place
I know this much is true
Hey 'Rrific kid!
We know you're there
We love you 'cause you're you!

If you think you're 'Rrific' or know someone who is, fill out the nomination form below and send it to:

Junior Inquirer
'KIDS'R'RRIFIC' Page
Phil. Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces
corner Yague & Mascardo Sts.
1231 Makati City

Chosen nominees will be featured on this page and will get a free Junior Inquirer T-shirt!

Kid 'r'rrific

nomination form

I nominate:____________________

Age: ____________________

I think she's/he's 'Rrific because: (Here's a tip! Write a detailed description of a good deed, project or accomplishment by your nominee.)

She/he lives at ____________________

and studies at ____________________

Her/his contact number is: ______

Sender's Name: ____________________

Sender's Age & School:____________

Sender's Address: ______________

Sender's Contact No. ____________

Chesca and Alex: Volunteer Teachers

Summer is a time to give for these gals from St. Scholastica's College

By Eline Santos

THE dela Concepcion sisters, 11-year-old Francesca and 12-year-old Alexandra, use their summer breaks helping out with kids.

Last year, Chesca and Alex volunteered as assistant teachers at Kinder Camp, a preschool in Makati.

"I enjoy being with kids and I like to teach," says Chesca, an incoming fifth-grader at St. Scholastica's College in Manila.

The girls helped their preschooler friends in different ways—from picking the correct-colored crayon to wrapping up *polvoron* which the kids made.

WHILE they share a love for kids, Chesca enjoys sports more while Alex is into singing and art.

ROGER CARPIO

"It was exciting," says Alex, an incoming freshman at St. Scho. "The kids are super *bait, malikot pero madaling pagsabihan.*"

They hope to spend time again with their hyperactive but cooperative students—maybe when Chesca's summer classes and Alex's camp are finished.

In the meantime, the girls alternate afternoons to look after their newest cousin, one-month-old Julio Gabriel Lacson.

"It feels good to take care of the baby," Chesca smiles.

Before their aunt gave birth to Julio, the girls used to tag along and observe her at work as a speech pathologist. They would also like to help other people as a doctor or speech pathologist someday.

Meanwhile, the girls have their babysitting and assistant teaching to keep them busy.

"It's wonderful to be given the chance," says Alex, "the experience to teach other children."

JOSEPH enjoys doing the "boink-boink" where the yoyo seems to bounce in its cradle.

JOHNNY VILLENA

Joseph, the Yoyo Master

The yoyo is a Pinoy invention and this kid is out to show them all

By Eline Santos

WITH his masterful display of yoyo tricks on his Aqua Dragon Supreme, 14-year-old Joseph Aries Junsay became the Super Yoyo Freestyle Champion last March 7.

The competition lasted more than five hours as about 60 yoyo fanatics did their string-folding, free-hand and off-string tricks.

Even before the winners were announced, one competitor predicted Joseph could be the winner because of the way he timed his tricks to the music.

"I do it like a dance," says the freshman from Sta. Elena High School in Marikina.

Joseph practices every chance he gets. His second home is a toy store where he learns and practices tricks after school.

Joseph says that when he sees someone better than he is, "I ask them to teach me so that I will know it too."

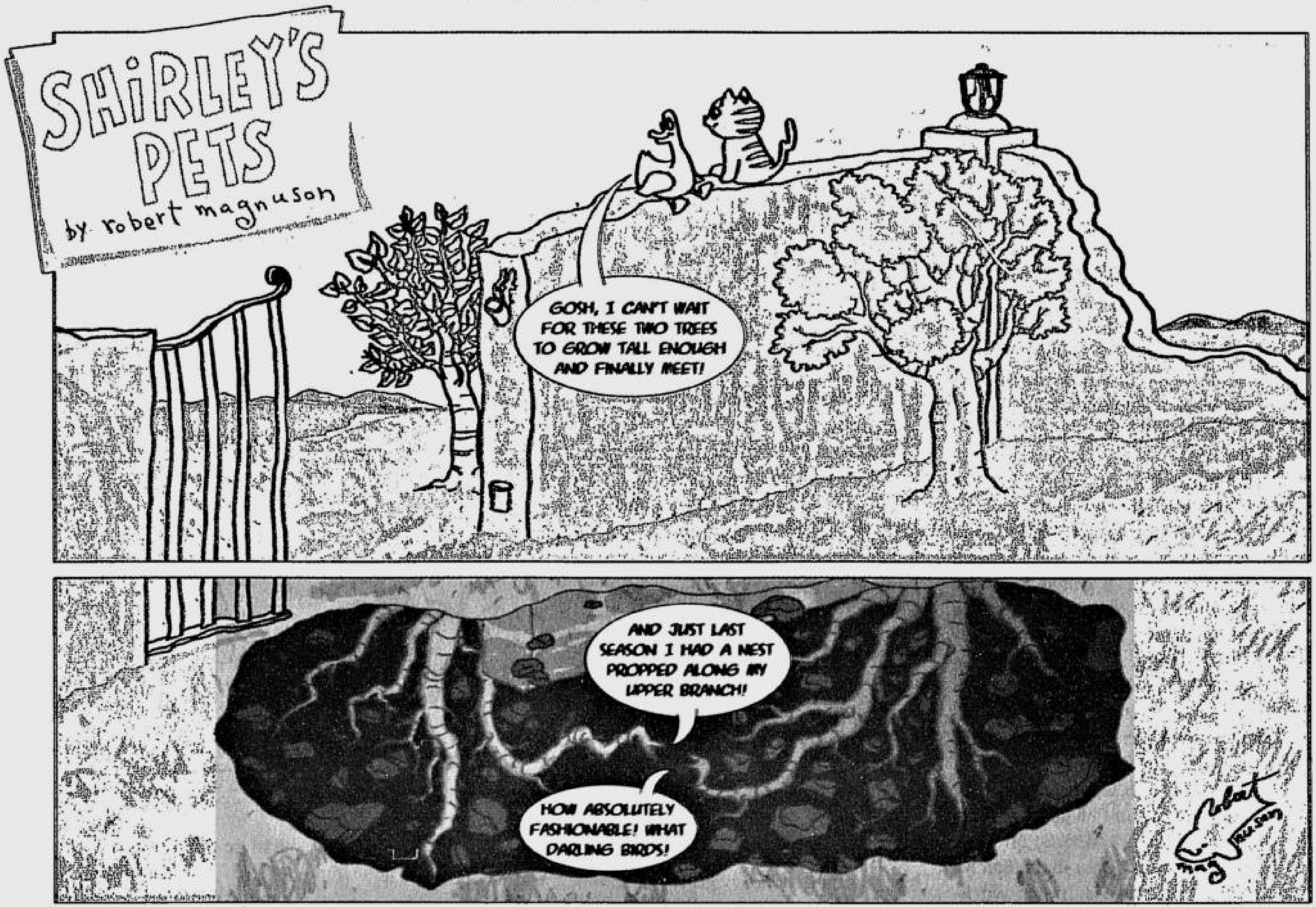
His favorite character from Super Yoyo is Chuta because of his skill in string tricks.

Unlike the anime where the rivals are out to get each other, spinners in real life help each other learn.

This summer, Joseph will be joining yoyo masters in different malls. He's going to teach other kids how to do tricks.

"Try it out," Joseph invites. "The ones who are really good get to go to other countries."

Joseph hopes his next prize will be from an international yoyo competition in California. Yo for it, Joseph!


SHIRLEY'S PETS
by robert magnuson
GOSH, I CAN'T WAIT FOR THESE TWO TREES TO GROW TALL ENOUGH AND FINALLY MEET!
AND JUST LAST SEASON I HAD A NEST PROPPED ALONG MY UPPER BRANCH!
HOW ABSOLUTELY FASHIONABLE! WHAT DARLING BIRDS!
robert magnuson

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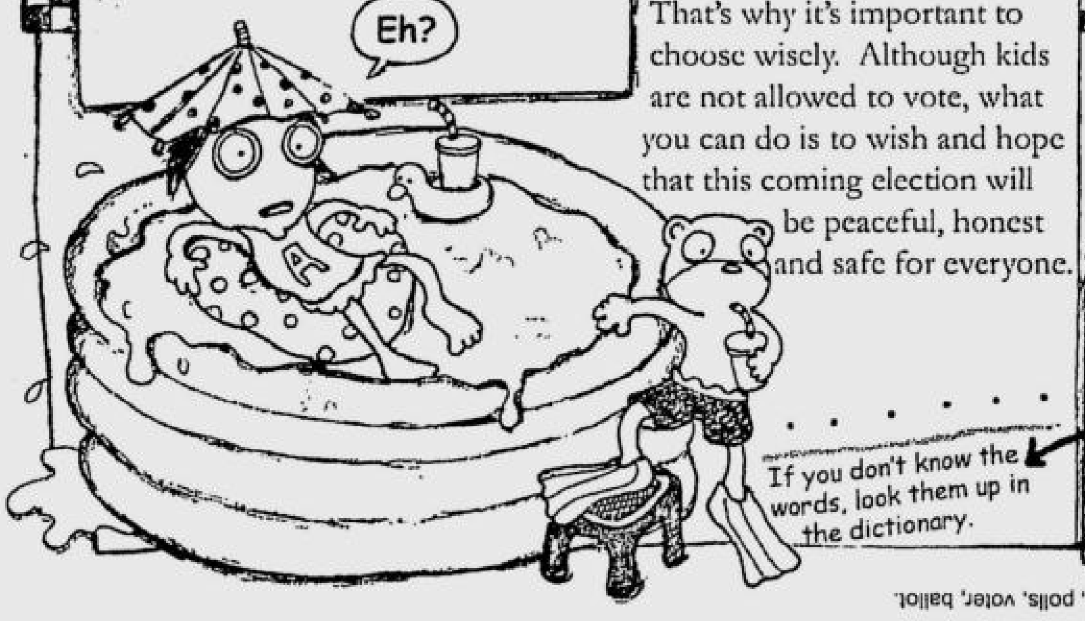
Atomo & Weboy BUDDHA BEAR

There! There!

By Lyra Abueg Garcellano

16 more days!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PARENTS ARE THINKING?



HEY, KID!

On May 10 an important event called the election is going to happen. Your parents, aunts, uncles, lolos, lolas, older sisters and brothers are going out to vote! They will choose the people who will hold different positions in the government. These people will be responsible for governing our country. That's why it's important to choose wisely. Although kids are not allowed to vote, what you can do is to wish and hope that this coming election will be peaceful, honest and safe for everyone.

If you don't know the words, look them up in the dictionary.

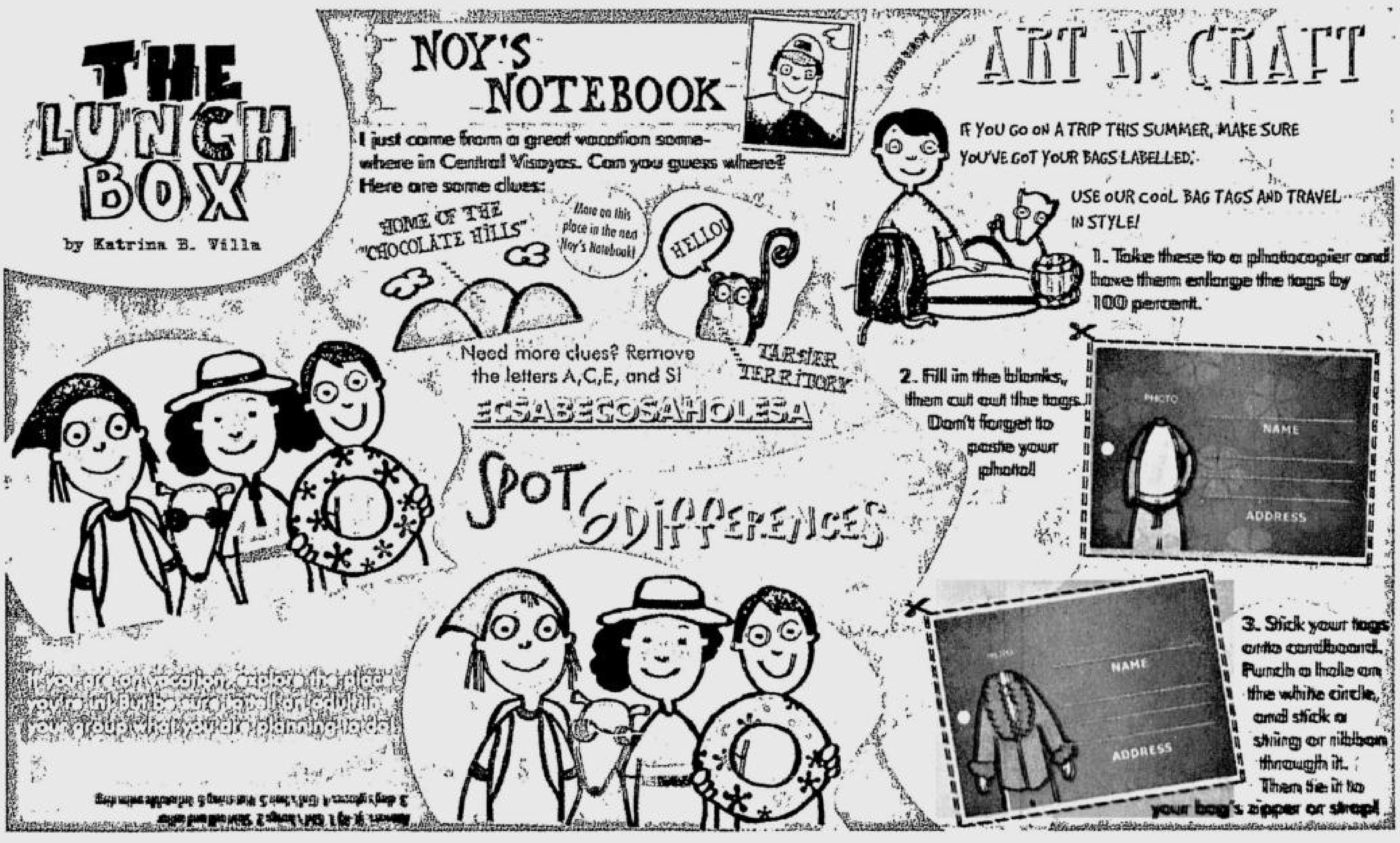
A	Q	R	T	C	U	L	A	K	J	L	N	U	Z	A	B	C	H
D	E	B	S	E	F	A	I	R	B	M	C	B	O	D	E	F	O
K	P	O	L	L	W	A	T	C	H	E	R	A	T	Y	G	H	N
O	E	B	G	E	F	V	Y	N	A	G	D	L	P	P	H	O	E
J	A	A	H	C	I	X	T	Z	V	Q	I	L	I	R	J	P	S
Z	G	L	J	T	P	O	L	L	S	H	V	O	T	E	R	E	T
G	E	L	S	O	K	M	S	R	C	R	G	T	J	C	K	J	Q
W	H	O	X	R	L	D	U	V	A	F	H	B	F	I	L	U	T
A	I	T	E	A	U	T	P	E	M	G	I	O	N	N	M	S	U
L	X	V	O	T	E	C	Y	K	P	Q	M	X	O	C	N	T	B
M	N	O	Y	E	B	D	Z	E	A	P	E	A	C	T	O	S	C
I	N	D	E	L	I	B	L	E	I	N	K	P	Q	R	P	V	D
F	A	I	R	B	W	A	N	D	G	B	E	W	I	S	E	W	E
A	P	B	C	D	E	F	C	A	N	D	I	D	A	T	E	X	Y
T	H	I	N	K	H	A	R	D	J	U	S	V	W	X	R	Z	A

UNSCRAMBLE & SEARCH!

BATOLLXOB
PLLOWTACHRE
PCREINTC
CANDDAIET
ELEEOCTRTA

CMAGAINP
IDENLIBEL KIN
TOVE
PLLSO
VORET
LLOTAB

ballot box, pollwatcher, precinct, candidate, electorate, campaign, indelible ink, vote, polls, voter, ballot.


HOME OF THE "CHOCOLATE HILLS"
More on this place in the next Noy's Notebook!
HELLO!
TARSIER TERRITORY
PHOTO
NAME
ADDRESS

THE LUNCH BOX

by Katrina B. Villa

NOY'S NOTEBOOK

I just came from a great vacation somewhere in Central Visayas. Can you guess where? Here are some clues:

Need more clues? Remove the letters A,C,E, and S!

ECSABECOSAHOLESA

SPOT 6 DIFFERENCES

If you are on vacation, explore the place you're in! But be sure to tell an adult in your group what you are planning to do!

ART N. CRAFT

IF YOU GO ON A TRIP THIS SUMMER, MAKE SURE YOU'VE GOT YOUR BAGS LABELLED.

USE OUR COOL BAG TAGS AND TRAVEL IN STYLE!

1. Take these to a photocopier and have them enlarge the tags by 100 percent.
2. Fill in the blanks, then cut out the tags. Don't forget to paste your photo!
3. Stick your tags onto cardboard. Punch a hole on the white circle, and stick a string or ribbon through it. Then tie it to your bag's zipper or strap!

Two dogs, cat honored for saving lives

(from page 1)

Heroic Dagul

Last year, 48-year-old mechanic Willy Castillo said he had a bad feeling about a storm coming. So he took his three younger children to sleep over at a friend's house. His older son Wilmar, 16, and the family dog Dagul stayed home.

Willy said his son was about to go to sleep when Dagul started barking incessantly and kept jumping on the bed. When Wilmar went out to check if anything was amiss, he saw that a landslide was about to engulf their house. The boy ran to safety, and in his panic forgot to take Dagul with him.

When the family came back two days later, they were elated to find that Dagul had survived the tragedy.

Aside from his Golden Paw Award, Dagul earlier received the Elizabeth Lewyt Award for Heroic Compassionate Animals from The North Shore Animal League of America.

Pache's Barks

On Jan. 29, 2004, 36-year-old Diosdado Erro was sleeping soundly at the aircon repair shop where he worked. At around 2:30 a.m. his dog Pache roused him from sleep with his insistent barking.

Diosdado found that the shop was on fire. Thanks to Pache, Diosdado and his co-workers were able to get out in time.

An Uneasy Cat

Toby, a former stray cat, turned out to be a guardian angel for a family in Quezon City.

His guardian Lori Villar says Toby was an extremely shy cat when he first came to them, hiding under the bed and coming out only to feed.

One evening in 2001, Toby was clearly not himself. He tried to get Lori's attention by jumping into her bed and swiping her with his claws.

When Lori got the message and followed Toby into her son Andrei's room, she found that a rubber mat had caught fire because of a short circuit. The family was able to put it out, thanks to Toby's warning.

The shy Toby has permanently made himself 4-year-old Andrei's guardian-angel-cat.

"Wherever my son goes, he's there," says Lori.

Four great dogs were also posthumously awarded the Golden Paw Award: German Shepherd Pakko, toy poodle Lester, Golden Retriever Cloie, and pug Frankie.

By Christine A. Paita

Got something for Out There? Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax number is 897-4794, and our e-mail address is ji@inquirer.com.ph.

Workshops!

SUMMER HAVEN. Kids ages 7 and below, get busy with reading, math, art and cooking classes at The Learning Haven from May 10-27, Mondays to Thursdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Enrollment is on April 28 and 29. For inquiries, please call 636-0658 or 0917-8139380. The Learning Haven is at 64 San Rafael St., Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City.

NEW ACTIVITIES. Learn new skills with Little Hands' Carpentry and Tools Workshop from April 28-30, 2-5 p.m. For inquiries and reservations, visit the Sinag Arts Studio at #664 San Ignacio St. Brgy. Plainview, Mandaluyong City. Call 531-3491 or telefax no. 531-9524.

KUYA Jomike and Kuya Robert of "Art is-kool"

ART IS COOL! On April 30, "Art is-kool"'s Kuya Robert and Kuya Jomike will conduct an art workshop at Starmall Las Piñas at 1 p.m. Interested parties can bring any Art is-kool project to register. Registration starts at 10 a.m. at the mall's Activity Hub. "Art is-kool" will premiere on May 1 on ABC 5 at 9:30 a.m. with new co-host, Kuya Jomike.

ANIMATION AND MORE. Trumpets Playshop now offers a course on animation under Phil Cartoon's Rolly Sabado. Other courses are Musical Theater, Basic Acting, One-on-One Voice, Streetdancing, Photography and Modeling. Classes end on June 5. For inquiries, call 636-2842 or 633-5010. Drop by the Trumpets office at the 6th Level Carpark, Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong City.

CALLING KIDDIE SHUTTERBUGS. Sign up for Mandy Navasero's Digital/SLR Summer Photoworkshop. Workshop is on Saturdays, until May 29, from 2 to 5 p.m. The Mandy Navasero Photopro Studio is at Rm. 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo St.), Bel-Air II Village, Makati City. Call 899-1767 or 896-3208.

MUSEO LEARNING. Know about children's rights and responsibilities on May 12-13 through role play, games and discussions at Museo Pambata. On May 19-20, there will be a workshop for kids ages 13-17 dubbed Value and Create Peace, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will include film showing and storytelling of peace and conflict stories. Call 523-1797 to 98.

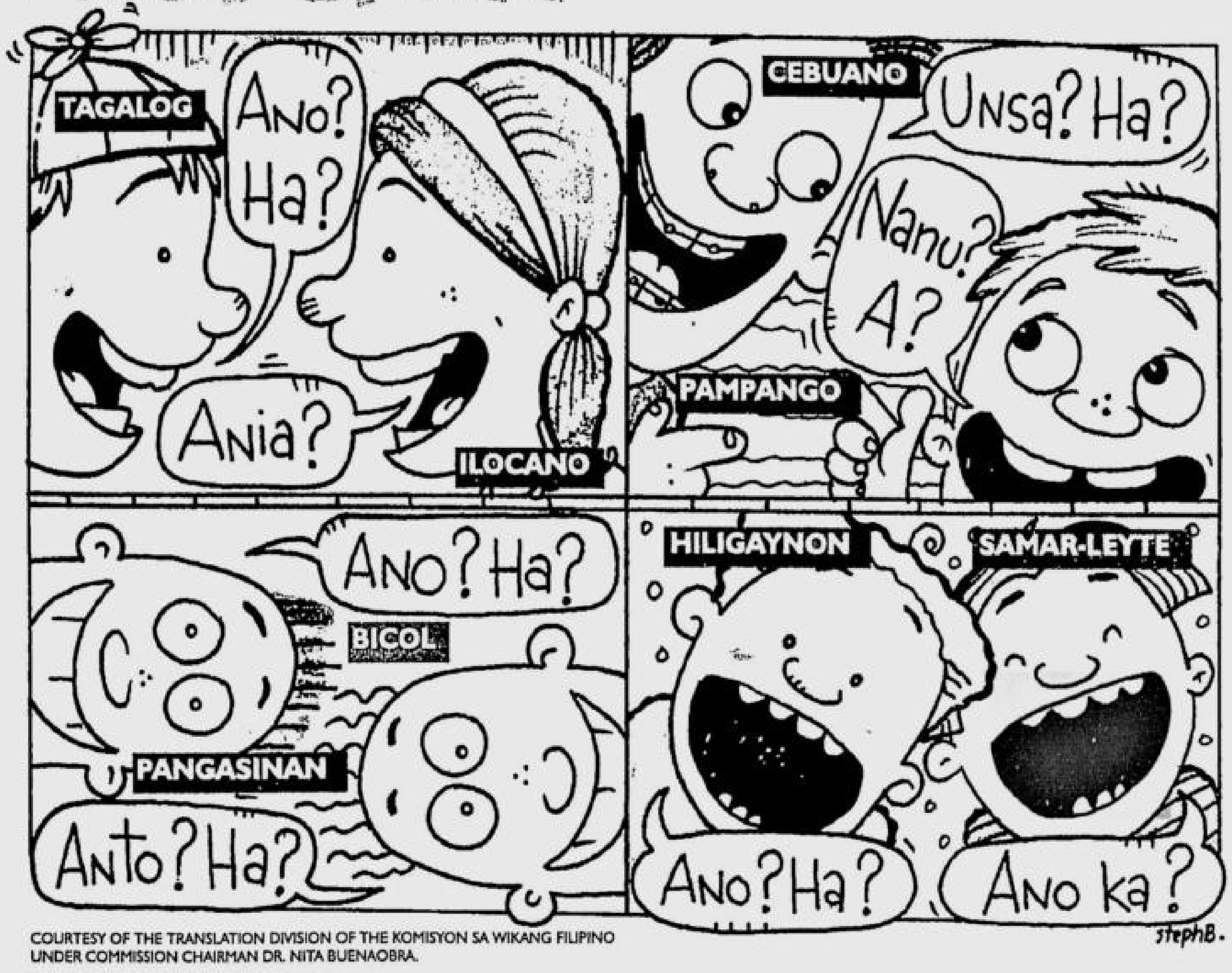
KIDS AT ART. The Kids At Art workshop is ongoing until May 20. Interested kids ages 5-12 may call 375-6275 for details.

SALI NA! Gamay Arkoncel-Dacanay of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) conducts "Bata, Bata, Sali Ka Na!," a creative summer workshop for kids ages 4-10. Workshop is ongoing until May 13, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Activities include storytelling, painting, drawing, games and songs, creative drama, creative body movement and puppetry. Call 413-8816 or 0917-7874615.

ART START. Kids ages 8 and below are invited to join the Adarna House workshops. Activities include Paint and Patterns, April 28; Creative Colors, May 5; and a Lap-Reading Workshop on May 7. Workshops will be held at Fully Booked from 2-4 p.m. To participate, simply purchase an Adarna Gabay Manual or any three Adarna Storybooks. Call Joanne Avilla at 756-5004 or Aneka Rodriguez at 372-3548 loc 110.

LITTLE CHEFS. Learn to cook simple recipes! Join San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center's Kids Kitchen Camp. Kids ages 8-13 will learn cooking and baking while having fun and meeting new friends. Sessions will be on May 4, 5 and 7, and the last batch on May 11, 12 and 14, from 1-4 p.m. Classes will be held at Legazpi corner Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City. To enroll, call 671-9876 locals 2771, 402, 404 & 405.

Pinoy-Speak



COURTESY OF THE TRANSLATION DIVISION OF THE KOMISYON SA WIKANG FILIPINO UNDER COMMISSION CHAIRMAN DR. NITA BUENAOBRA.

NIDO LITTLE ARTISTS. This summer, NIDO visits 37 schools all over the country to hold art workshops for kids. Watch out for the NIDO Little Artists workshop in the following venues: Quezon City (Art in the Park, Amazing Art, Oak Tree Learn and Play Center, Creative Beginners, Succeed Learning Center, CARE Center for Early Learning, and Innovative Center for Beginning Beginners-ICBB), Makati City (Child Learning Center, ICBB), Manila (Museo Pambata, Philippine Women's University Totalle Wellness and Fitness Center, UST Museum of Arts and Sciences), Parañaque City (Center for Performing Arts, Marymount School, ICBB, Artkolektib), Pasig City (Aheadstart Child Development Center), Mandaluyong City (International Baptist College), Valenzuela City (Disciples Christian School), Angono and Cainta, Rizal (Nemiranda Arthouse, Angono Artists Association, Blanco Family Academy, God's Little Angels Development Center), Pampanga (St. John Integrated School, Northwestern Visayas Colleges), Iloilo City (UP Visayas), Cebu City (Cebu Academy of Arts), Davao City (Ford Academy of the Arts), Palawan (Kamarikutan Kape at Galeri), Laguna (Artists Inc.), and Baguio City (UP Baguio). For workshop schedules, please contact Leslie Noble at 0917-3291953.

Events

FOR LITTLE ATHLETES. The Little Gym features "Laro, Sayaw at Saya: Philippine Games and Dances made Fun" until May 22. For inquiries, call or visit The Little Gym today in any of the following branches: Mandaluyong (Shangri-La Plaza Mall) at 637-2463 or 64; Makati (Bonifacio Tech Center, Fort Bonifacio) at 815-1735 or 79; Alabang (Festival Supermall) at 850-4060 or 61; and Quezon City (Shoppersville, Katipunan Avenue) at 929-9013 or 18.

KIDDIE FAIR. Four days of fun activities await kid ages 3-13 on May 27-30 with "It's a Kids World" at the SM Megatrade Hall. Kids can join the Ms and Mr. Kids World, Dance Group, Chorale Group, On-the-Spot Drawing Contest, Essay Writing Contest, Taekwondo Competition, Me and My Super Mom, Me and My Dad contests. For details call 813-0148 or 893-9729.

SPLASHIN' SPONGEBOB! Watch out for Spongebob Squarepants and friends as they head to Manila and Cebu for a splashin' musical show. Catch the gang on today and tomorrow at the Alabang Town Center and on April 30, May 1 and 2 at Ayala Center Cebu. The event, dubbed Bikini Bottom Bash, will take kids on an underwater journey with games, songs and dance.

CELEBRATE READING. Kids who love listening to and telling stories will have a feast in the upcoming Tell-A-Bration!, the Philippines' first storytelling festival. Watch out for storytelling events in bookstores, museums, libraries and malls in May. And on April 30 and May 2, kids, parents and educators are invited to the Storytelling for Education workshop at Museo Pambata, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For details, please contact Geraldine Lim at 0918-2690794.

Harry Potter Items

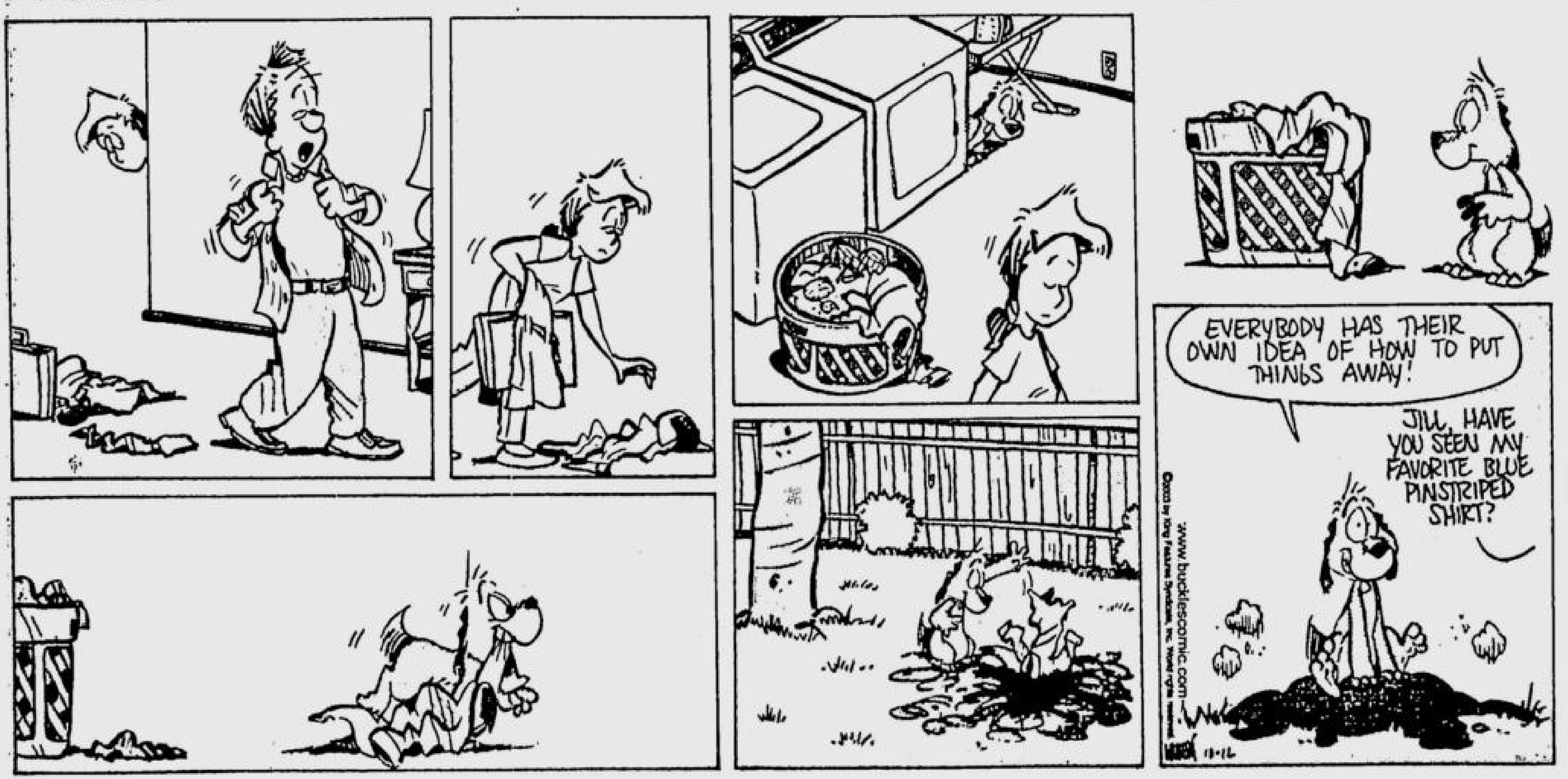
POTTER FEVER. With "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" coming to theaters in June, HP fans will be looking for souvenirs. Harry Potter back-to-school merchandise, including notebooks, pencil boxes, binders, drawing books, folders, school cases, desk sets, etc. are now available at National Book Store, Shoemart, and other leading dept. stores.

Books

NEW READS. National Book Store features three kiddie titles this April. Meet the comic hero "Asterix" in the self-titled book series. Get enchanted with back-to-back classic fairytales in "My Side of the Story 1 and 2" from Disney Princess. Lastly, watch out for Kate Brian's "The Princess and the Pauper," where two girls trade places and discover how different their two worlds are.

BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


EVERYBODY HAS THEIR OWN IDEA OF HOW TO PUT THINGS AWAY!
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